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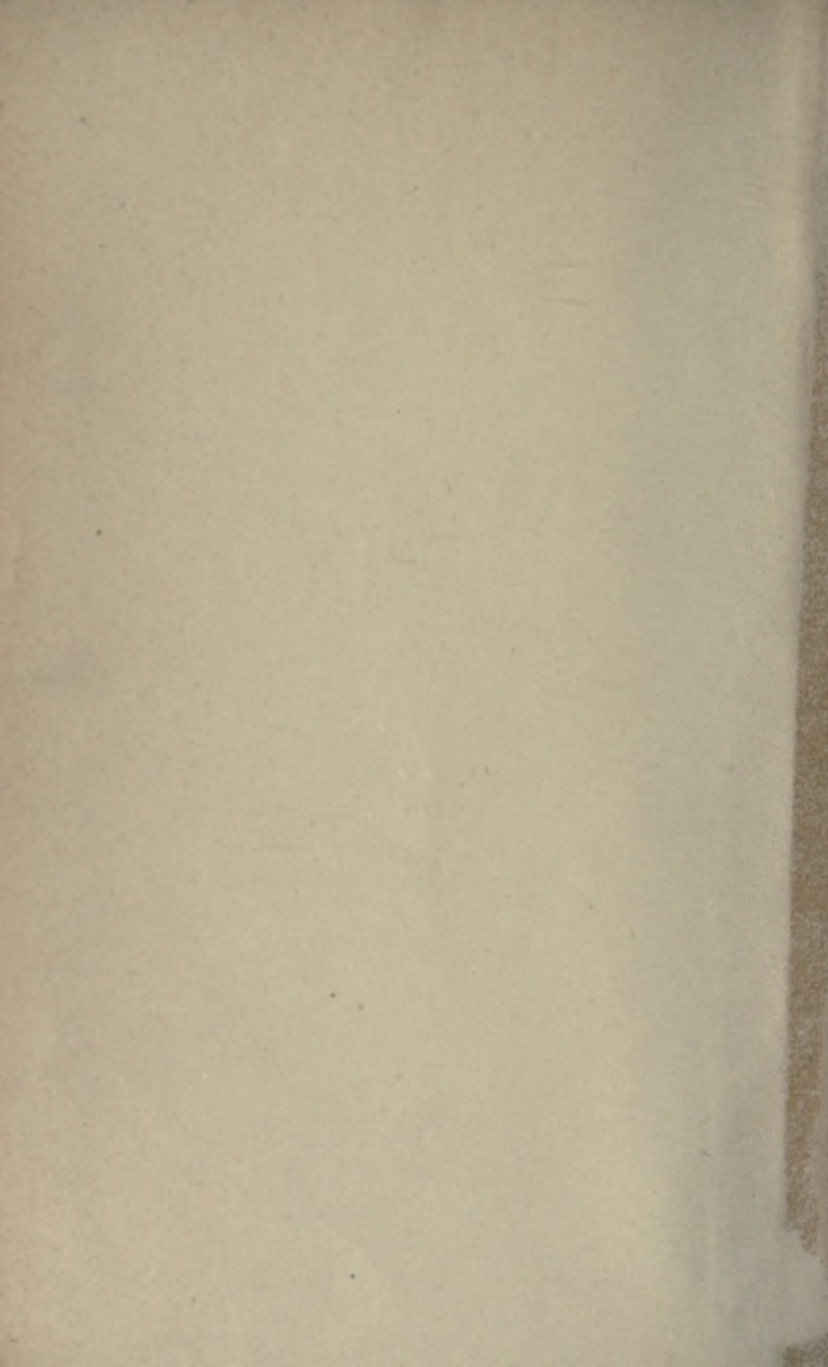
ULWER LYTTON'S NOVELS

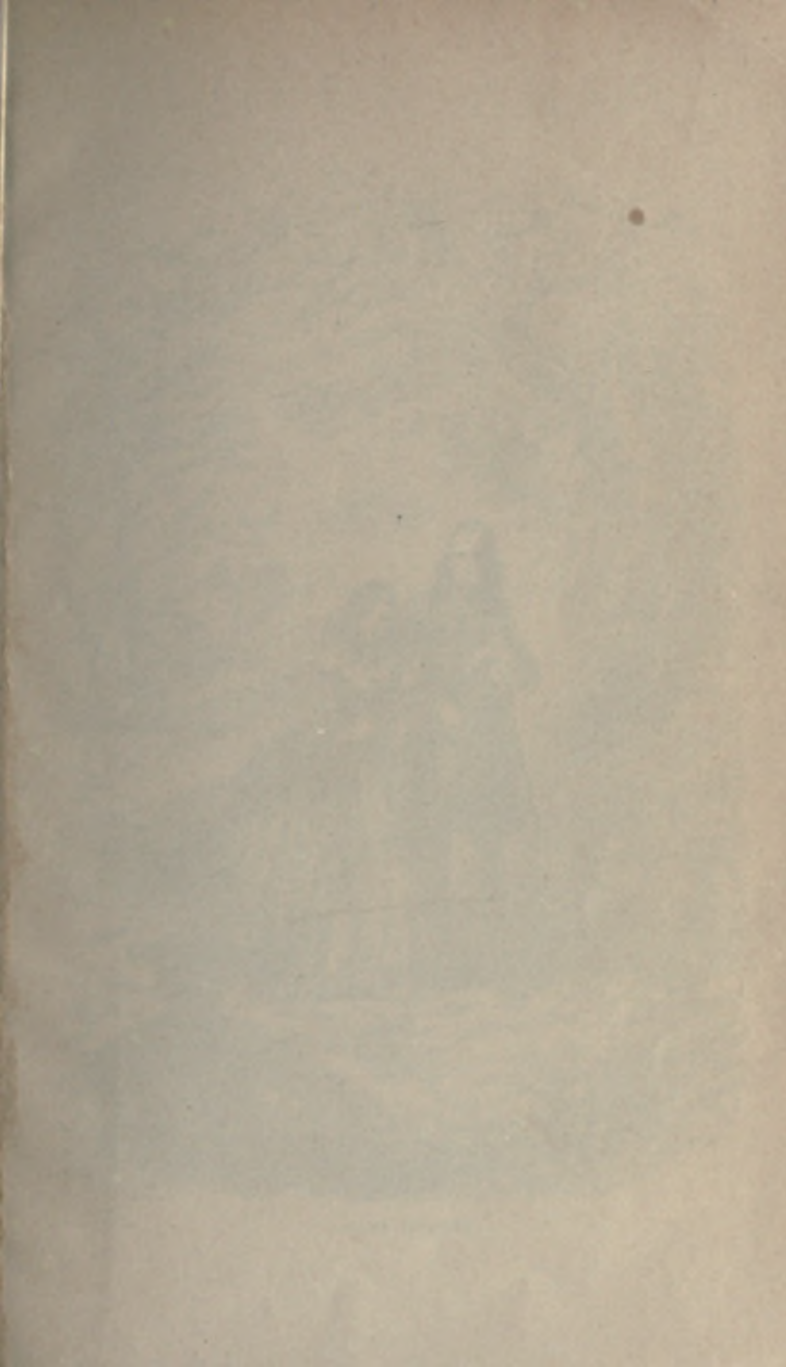




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EUGENE ARAM.

EUGENE ARAM

A TALE

[4.]

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON

(LORD LYTTON)

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GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

LONDON: BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL

NEW YORK: 9 LAFAYETTE PLACE

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

&c. &c.

SIR,

It has long been my ambition to add some humble tribute to the offerings laid upon the shrine of your genius. At each succeeding book that I have given to the world, I have paused to consider if it were worthy to be inscribed with your great name, and at each I have played the procrastinator, and hoped for that morrow of better desert which never came. But *defluat annis*, the time runs on—and I am tired of waiting for the ford which the tides refuse. I seize, then, the present opportunity, not as the best, but as the only one I can be sure of commanding, to express that affectionate admiration with which you have inspired me in common with all your contemporaries, and which a French writer has not ungracefully termed “the happiest prerogative of genius.” As a Poet, and as a Novelist, your fame has attained to that height in which praise has become superfluous; but in the character of the writer there seems to me a yet higher claim to veneration than in that of the writings. The example your genius sets us, who can emulate?—the example your moderation bequeaths to us, who shall forget? That nature must indeed be gentle which has conciliated the envy that pursues

intellectual greatness, and left without an enemy a man who has no living equal in renown.

You have gone for a while from the scenes you have immortalised, to regain, we trust, the health which has been impaired by your noble labours, or by the manly struggles with adverse fortunes, which have not found the frame as indomitable as the mind. Take with you the prayers of all whom your genius, with playful art, has soothed in sickness—or has strengthened, with generous precepts, against the calamities of life.*

“Navis quæ tibi creditum
Debes Virgilium——
Reddas incolumem!” †

You, I feel assured, will not deem it presumptuous in one, who, to that bright and undying flame which now streams from the grey hills of Scotland,—the last halo with which you have crowned her literary glories,—has turned from his first childhood with a deep and unrelaxing devotion; you, I feel assured, will not deem it presumptuous in him to inscribe an idle work with your illustrious name:—a work which, however worthless in itself, assumes something of value in his eyes when thus rendered a tribute of respect to you.

THE AUTHOR OF “EUGENE ARAM.”

LONDON,

December 22, 1831.

* Written at the time of Sir W. Scott's visit to Italy—after the great blow to his health and fortunes.

† O ship, thou owest to us Virgil—restore in safety him whom we entrusted to thee

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1831.

SINCE, dear Reader, I last addressed thee, in PAUL CLIFFORD, nearly two years have elapsed, and somewhat more than four years since, in PELHAM, our familiarity first began. The Tale which I now submit to thee differs equally from the last as from the first of these works; for, of the two evils, perhaps it is even better to disappoint thee in a new style, than to weary thee with an old. With the facts on which the tale of EUGENE ARAM is founded, I have exercised the common and fair license of writers of fiction: it is chiefly the more homely parts of the real story that have been altered; and for what I have added, and what omitted, I have the sanction of all established authorities, who have taken greater liberties with characters yet more recent, and far more protected by historical recollections. The book was, for the most part, written in the early part of the year, when the interest which the task created in the Author was undivided by other subjects of excitement, and he had leisure enough not only to be *nescio quid meditans nugarum*, but also to be *totus in illis*.*

I originally intended to adapt the story of Eugene Aram to the

* Not only to be meditating I know not what of trifles but also to be wholly engaged on them.

Stage. That design was abandoned when more than half completed : but I wished to impart to this Romance something of the nature of Tragedy,—something of the more transferable of its qualities. Enough of this: it is not the Author's wishes, but the Author's books that the world will judge him by. Perhaps, then (with this I conclude), in the dull monotony of public affairs, and in these long winter evenings, when we gather round the fire, prepared for the gossip's tale, willing to indulge the fear, and to believe the legend, perhaps, dear Reader, thou mayest turn, not reluctantly, even to these pages, for at least a newer excitement than the *Cholera*, or for a momentary relief from the everlasting discussions on "*the Bill*." *

LONDON,

December 22, 1841.

—the year of the Reform Bill.

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1840.

THE strange history of Eugene Aram had excited my interest and wonder long before the present work was composed or conceived. It so happened, that during Aram's residence at Lynn, his reputation for learning had attracted the notice of my grandfather—a country gentleman living in the same county, and of more intelligence and accomplishments than, at that day, usually characterised his class. Aram frequently visited at Heydon (my grandfather's house), and gave lessons, probably in no very elevated branches of erudition, to the younger members of the family. This I chanced to hear when I was on a visit in Norfolk, some two years before this novel was published, and it tended to increase the interest with which I had previously speculated on the phenomena of a trial which, take it altogether, is perhaps the most remarkable in the register of English crime. I endeavoured to collect such anecdotes of Aram's life and manners as tradition and hearsay still kept afloat. These anecdotes were so far uniform that they all concurred in representing him as a person who, till the detection of the crime for which he was sentenced, had appeared of the mildest character and the most unexceptionable morals. An invariable gentleness and patience in his

mode of tuition—qualities then very uncommon at schools—had made him so beloved by his pupils at Lynn, that, in after life, there was scarcely one of them who did not persist in the belief of his innocence. His personal and moral peculiarities, as described in these pages, are such as were related to me by persons who had heard him described by his contemporaries: the calm benign countenance—the delicate health—the thoughtful stoop—the noiseless step—the custom, not uncommon with scholars and absent men, of muttering to himself—a singular eloquence in conversation, when once roused from silence—an active tenderness and charity to the poor, with whom he was always ready to share his own scanty means—an apparent disregard to money, except when employed in the purchase of books—an utter indifference to the ambition usually accompanying self-taught talent, whether to better the condition or to increase the repute;—these, and other traits of the character portrayed in the novel, are, as far as I can rely on my information, faithful to the features of the original.

That a man thus described—so benevolent that he would rob his own necessities to administer to those of another, so humane that he would turn aside from the worm in his path—should have been guilty of the foulest of human crimes, viz.—murder for the sake of gain; that a crime thus committed should have been so episodic and apart from the rest of his career, that, however it might rankle in his conscience, it should never have hardened his nature; that, through a life of some duration, none of the errors, none of the vices, which would seem essentially to belong to a character capable of a deed so black from motives apparently so sordid,* should have been discovered or suspected;—all this

* For I put wholly out of question the excuse of jealousy, as unsupported by any evidence—never hinted at by Aram himself (at least on any sufficient

presents an anomaly in human conduct so rare and surprising, that it would be difficult to find any subject more adapted for that metaphysical speculation and analysis, in order to indulge which, Fiction, whether in the drama, or the higher class of romance, seeks its materials and grounds its lessons in the chronicles of passion and crime

The guilt of Eugene Aram is not that of a vulgar ruffian : it leads to views and considerations vitally and wholly distinct from those with which profligate knavery and brutal cruelty revolt and displease us in the literature of Newgate and the Hulks. His crime does, in fact, belong to those startling paradoxes which the poetry of all countries, and especially of our own, has always delighted to contemplate and examine. Whenever crime appears the aberration and monstrous product of a great intellect, or of a nature ordinarily virtuous, it becomes not only the subject for genius, which deals with passions, to describe ; but a problem for philosophy, which deals with actions, to investigate and solve :—hence, the *Macbeths* and *Richards*, the *Inces* and *Othellos*. My regret, therefore, is not that I chose a subject unworthy of elevated fiction, but that such a subject did not occur to some one capable of treating it as it deserves ; and I never felt this more strongly than when the late Mr. Godwin (in conversing with me after the publication of this romance) observed that “he had always thought the story of Eugene Aram peculiarly adapted for fiction, and that he had more than once entertained the notion of making it the foundation of a novel.” I can well conceive what depth and power that gloomy record would have taken from the dark and inquiring genius of the author of *Caleb Williams*. In

authority)—and at variance with the only fact which the trial establishes, viz. that the robbery was the crime planned, and the cause, whether accidental or otherwise, of the murder

fact, the crime and trial of Eugene Aram arrested the attention and engaged the conjectures of many of the most eminent men of his own time. His guilt or innocence was the matter of strong contest; and so keen and so enduring was the sensation created by an event thus completely distinct from the ordinary annals of human crime, that even History turned aside from the sonorous narrative of the struggles of parties, and the feuds of kings, to commemorate the learning and the guilt of the humble school master of Lynn. Did I want any other answer to the animadversions of commonplace criticism, it might be sufficient to say that what the historian relates, the novelist has little right to disdain.

Before entering on this romance, I examined with some care the probabilities of Aram's guilt; for I need scarcely perhaps observe, that the legal evidence against him is extremely deficient—furnished almost entirely by one (Houseman) confessedly an accomplice of the crime, and a partner in the booty; and that, in the present day, a man tried upon evidence so scanty and suspicious would unquestionably escape conviction. Nevertheless, I must frankly own that the moral evidence appeared to me more convincing than the legal; and, though not without some doubt, which, in common with many, I still entertain of the real facts of the murder,* I adopted that view which, at all events, was the best suited to the higher purposes of fiction. On the whole, I still think that if the crime were committed by Aram, the motive was not very far removed from one which led recently to a remarkable murder in Spain. A priest in that country, wholly absorbed in learned pursuits, and apparently of spotless life, confessed that, being debarred by extreme poverty from prosecuting a study

* See Preface to the Present Edition, p. xviii.

which had become the sole passion of his existence, he had reasoned himself into the belief that it would be admissible to rob a very dissolute, worthless man, if he applied the money so obtained to the acquisition of a knowledge which he could not otherwise acquire, and which he held to be profitable to mankind. Unfortunately, the dissolute rich man was not willing to be robbed for so excellent a purpose: he was armed and he resisted—a struggle ensued, and the crime of homicide was added to that of robbery. The robbery was premeditated: the murder was accidental. But he who would accept some similar interpretation of Aram's crime, must, to comprehend fully the lessons which belong to so terrible a picture of frenzy and guilt, consider also the physical circumstances and condition of the criminal at the time: severe illness—intense labour of the brain—poverty bordering upon famine—the mind preternaturally at work, devising schemes and excuses to arrive at the means for ends ardently desired. And all this duly considered, the reader may see the crime bodying itself out from the shades and chimeras of a horrible hallucination—the awful dream of a brief but delirious and convulsed disease. It is thus only that we can account for the contradiction of one deed at war with a whole life—blasting, indeed, for ever the happiness; but making little revolution in the pursuits and disposition of the character. No one who has examined with care and thoughtfulness the aspects of Life and Nature, but must allow that, in the contemplation of such a spectacle, great and most moral truths must force themselves on the notice and sink deep into the heart. The entanglements of human reasoning; the influence of circumstance upon deeds; the perversion that may be made, by one self-palting with the Fiend, of elements the most glorious; the secret effect of conscience in frustrating all for which the crime was done—leaving

genius without hope, knowledge without fruit—deadening benevolence into mechanism—tainting love itself with terror and suspicion;—such reflections—leading, with subtler minds, to many more vast and complicated theorems in the consideration of our nature, social and individual—arise out of the tragic moral which the story of Eugene Aram (were it but adequately treated) could not fail to convey.

BRUNELLS,

4 August, 1840

PREFACE

TO

THE PRESENT EDITION

IF none of my prose works have been so attacked as **EUGENE ARAM**, none have so completely triumphed over attack. It is true that, whether from real or affected ignorance of the true morality of fiction, a few critics may still reiterate the old commonplace charges of "selecting heroes from Newgate," or "investing murderers with interest;" but the firm hold which the work has established in the opinion of the general public, and the favour it has received in every country where English literature is known, suffice to prove that, whatever its faults, it belongs to that legitimate class of fiction which illustrates life and truth, and only deals with crime as the recognised agency of pity and terror, in the conduct of tragic narrative. All that I would say farther on this score has been said in the general defence of my writings which I put forth two years ago; and I ask the indulgence of the reader if I repeat myself:—

"Here, unlike the milder guilt of Paul Clifford, the author was not to imply reform to society, nor open in this world atonement and pardon to the criminal. As it would have been wholly in vain to disguise, by mean tamperings with art and truth, the

ordinary habits of life and attributes of character, which all record and remembrance ascribed to Eugene Aram, as it would have defeated every end of the moral inculcated by his guilt, to portray in the caricature of the murderer of melodrame, a man immersed in study, of whom it was noted that he turned aside from the worm in his path, so I have allowed to him whatever contrasts with his inexpiable crime have been recorded on sufficient authority. But I have invariably taken care that the crime itself should stand stripped of every sophistry, and hideous to the perpetrator as well as to the world. Allowing all by which attention to his biography may explain the tremendous paradox of fearful guilt in a man aspiring after knowledge, and not generally inhumane—allowing that the crime came upon him in the partial insanity, produced by the combining circumstances of a brain overwrought by intense study, disturbed by an excited imagination, and the fumes of a momentary disease of the reasoning faculty, consumed by the desire of knowledge, unwholesome and morbid, because coveted as an end, not a means, added to the other physical causes of mental aberration—to be found in loneliness, and want verging upon famine;—all these, which a biographer may suppose to have conspired to his crime, have never been used by the novelist as excuses for its enormity, nor indeed, lest they should *seem* as excuses have they ever been clearly presented to the view. The moral consisted in showing more than the mere legal punishment at the close. It was to show how the consciousness of the deed was to exclude whatever humanity of character preceded and belied it from all active exercise—all social confidence; how the knowledge of the bar between the minds of others and his own deprived the criminal of all motive to ambition, and blighted knowledge of all fruit: Miserable in his affections, barren in his intellect—clinging to solitude, yet accursed in it—dreading

as a danger the fame he had once coveted—obscure in spite of learning, hopeless in spite of love, fruitless and joyless in his life, calamitous and shameful in his end;—surely such is no palliative of crime, no dalliance and toying with the grimness of evil! And surely, to any ordinary comprehension, any candid mind, such is the moral conveyed by the fiction of *EUGENE ARAM*.*

In point of composition *EUGENE ARAM* is, I think, entitled to rank amongst the best of my fictions. It somewhat humiliates me to acknowledge, that neither practice nor study has enabled me to surpass a work written at a very early age, in the skilful construction and patient development of plot; and though I have since sought to call forth higher and more subtle passions, I doubt if I have ever excited the two elementary passions of tragedy, viz., pity and terror, to the same degree. In mere style, too, *EUGENE ARAM*, in spite of certain verbal oversights, and defects in youthful taste (some of which I have endeavoured to remove from the present edition), appears to me unexcelled by any of my later writings, at least in what I have always studied as the main essential of style in narrative, viz., its harmony with the subject selected, and the passions to be moved;—while it exceeds them all in the minuteness and fidelity of its descriptions of external nature. This indeed it ought to do, since the study of external nature is made a peculiar attribute of the principal character whose fate colours the narrative. I do not know whether it has been observed that the time occupied by the events of the story is conveyed through the medium of such descriptions. Each description is introduced, not for its own sake, but to serve as calendar marking the gradual changes of the seasons as they bear on to his doom the guilty worshipper of Nature. And in this conception, and in the care with which it has been followed

* A Word to the Public, 1847.

out, I recognise one of my earliest but most successful attempts at the subtler principles of narrative art.

In this edition I have made one alteration, somewhat more important than mere verbal correction. On going, with maturer judgment, over all the evidences on which Aram was condemned, I have convinced myself, that though an accomplice in the robbery of Clarke, he was free both from the premeditated design and the actual deed of murder. The crime, indeed, would still rest on his conscience, and insure his punishment, as necessarily incidental to the robbery in which he was an accomplice, with Houseman; but finding my convictions, that in the murder itself he had no share, borne out by the opinion of many eminent lawyers, by whom I have heard the subject discussed, I have accordingly so shaped his confession to Walter.

Perhaps it will not be without interest to the reader, if I append to this preface an authentic specimen of Eugene Aram's composition, for which I am indebted to the courtesy of a gentleman by whose grandfather it was received, with other papers (especially a remarkable 'Outline of a New Lexicon'), during Aram's confinement in York Prison. The essay I select is, indeed, not without value in itself as a very curious and learned illustration of Popular Antiquities, and it serves also to show not only the comprehensive nature of Aram's studies, and the inquisitive eagerness of his mind, but also the fact that he was completely self-taught; for in contrast to much philological erudition, and to passages that evince considerable mastery in the higher resources of language, we may occasionally notice those lesser inaccuracies from which the writings of men solely self-educated are rarely free; indeed, Aram himself, in sending to a gentleman an elegy on Sir John Armitage, which shows much but undisciplined power of ver-

sification, says, " I send this elegy, which, indeed, if you had not had the curiosity to desire, I could not have had the assurance to offer, scarce believing I, who was hardly taught to read, have any abilities to write."

THE MELSUPPER AND SHOUTING THE CHURN.

THESE rural entertainments and usages were formerly more general all over England than they are at present ; being become by time, necessity, or avarice, complex, confined, and altered. They are commonly insisted upon by the reapers as customary things, and a part of their due for the toils of the harvest, and complied with by their masters perhaps more through regards of interest, than inclination. For should they refuse them the pleasures of this much expected time, this festal night, the youth especially, of both sexes, would decline serving them for the future, and employ their labours for others, who would promise them the rustic joys of the harvest supper, mirth and music, dance and song. These feasts appear to be the relics of Pagan ceremonies, or of Judaism, it is hard to say which, and carry in them more meaning and are of far higher antiquity than is generally apprehended. It is true the subject is more curious than important, and I believe altogether untouched ; and as it seems to be little understood, has been as little adverted to. I do not remember it to have been so much as the subject of a conversation. Let us make then a little excursion into this field, for the same reason men sometimes take a walk. Its traces are discoverable at a very great distance of time from ours, nay, seem as old as a sense of joy for the benefit of plentiful harvests and human gratitude to the eternal Creator

for his munificence to men. We hear it under various names in different counties, and often in the same county; as, *melsupper*, *churn supper*, *harvest supper*, *harvest home*, *feast of in-gathering*, &c. And perhaps this feast had been long observed, and by different tribes of people, before it became perceptible with the Jews. However, let that be as it will, the custom very lucidly appears from the following passages of S. S., *Exod.* xxiii. 16, "And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field." And its institution as a sacred right is commanded in *Levit.* xxiii. 39: "When ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast to the Lord."

The Jews then, as is evident from hence, celebrated the feast of harvest, and that by precept; and though no vestiges of any such feast either are or can be produced before these, yet the oblation of the Primitiæ, of which this feast was a consequence, is met with prior to this, for we find that, "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord,"—*Gen.* iv. 3.

Yet this offering of the first fruits, it may well be supposed, was not peculiar to the Jews, either at the time of, or after, its establishment by their legislator; neither the feast in consequence of it. Many other nations, either in imitation of the Jews, or rather by tradition from their several patriarchs, observed the right of offering their Primitiæ, and of solemnising a festival after it, in religious acknowledgment for the blessing of harvest, though that acknowledgment was ignorantly misapplied in being directed to a secondary, not the primary, fountain of this benefit;—namely to *Apollo or the Sun*.

For Callimachus affirms that these Primitiæ were sent by the people of every nation to the temple of Apollo in Delos, the most distant that enjoyed the happiness of corn and harvest, even by the *Hyperboreans* in particular, Hymn to Apol., Οἱ μεντοὶ καλαμῆν τε

καὶ ἱερὰ ἄρπγμα πρῶτοι ἀστὰκων, "Bring the sacred sheafs, and the mystic offerings."

Herodotus also mentions this annual custom of the Hyperboreans, remarking that those of Delos talk of *ἱερὰ ἐρδεόμενα ἐν καλάμῃ πύρρῃ ἐξ Ὑπερβορέων*, "Holy things tied up in sheaf of wheat conveyed from the Hyperboreans." And the Jews, by the command of their law, offered also a sheaf: "And shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of the harvest unto the priest."

This is not introduced in proof of any feast observed by the people who had harvests, but to show the universality of the custom of offering the Primitivæ, which preceded this feast. But yet it may be looked upon as equivalent to a proof; for as the offering and the feast appear to have been always and intimately connected in countries affording records, so it is more than probable they were connected too in countries which had none, or none that ever survived to our times. An entertainment and gaiety were still the concomitants of these rites, which with the vulgar, one may pretty truly suppose, were esteemed the most acceptable and material part of them, and a great reason of their having subsisted through such a length of ages, when both the populace and many of the learned too, have lost sight of the object to which they had been originally directed. This, among many other ceremonies of the heathen worship, became disused in some places and retained in others, but still continued declining after the promulgation of the Gospel. In short, there seems great reason to conclude, that this feast, which was once sacred to Apollo, was constantly maintained, when a far less valuable circumstance, i. e., *shouting the churn*, is observed to this day by the reapers, and from so old an era; for we read of this acclamation, *Isa. xvi. 9*. "For the shouting for thy summer fruits and for thy harvest is fallen;" and again, *ver. 10*: "And in

the vineyard there shall be no singing, their shouting shall be no shouting." Hence then, or from some of the Phœnician colonies, is our traditional "shouting the churn." But it seems these Orientals shouted both for joy of their harvest of grapes, and of corn. We have no quantity of the first to occasion so much joy as does our plenty of the last; and I do not remember to have heard whether their vintages abroad are attended with this custom. Bread or cakes compose part of the Hebrew offering (*Levit. xxiii. 13*), and a cake thrown upon the head of the victim was also part of the Greek offering to Apollo (see *Hom. Il. a*), whose worship was formerly celebrated in Britain, where the May-pole yet continues one remain of it. This they adorned with garlands on May-day, to welcome the approach of Apollo, or the sun, towards the north, and to signify that those flowers were the product of his presence and influence. But, upon the progress of Christianity, as was observed above, Apollo lost his divinity again, and the adoration of his deity subsided by degrees. Yet so permanent is custom, that this right of the harvest supper, together with that of the May-pole (of which last see *Voss. de Orig. and Prag. Idolatr. 1, 2*), have been preserved in Britain: and what had been anciently offered to the god, the reapers as prudently eat up themselves.

At last the use of the meal of the new corn was neglected, and the supper, so far as meal was concerned, was made indifferently of old or new corn, as was most agreeable to the founder. And here the usage itself accounts for the name of *Mel-supper* where *mel* signifies meal, or else the instrument called with us a *Mell*, wherewith antiquity reduced their corn to meal in a mortar, which still amounts to the same thing) for provisions of meal, or of corn in furmity, &c., composed by far the greatest part in these elder and country entertainments, perfectly conformable to the simplicity of those times places, and persons, however meanly

they may now be looked upon. And as the harvest was last concluded with several preparations of meal, or brought to be ready for the mill, this term became, in a translated signification, to mean the last of other things; as, when a horse comes last in the race, they often say in the north, "*he has got the mill.*"

All the other names of this country festivity sufficiently explain themselves, except *Churn-supper*, and this is entirely different from *Mel-supper*; but they generally nappen so near together, that they are frequently confounded. The *Churn-supper* was always provided when all was shorn, but the *Mel-supper* after all was got in. And it was called the *Churn-supper*, because, from immemorial times, it was customary to produce in a churn a great quantity of cream, and to circulate it by dishfuls to each of the rustic company, to be eaten with bread. And here sometimes very extraordinary execution has been done upon cream. And though this custom has been disused in many places, and agreeably commuted for by ale, yet it survives still, and that about Whitby and Scarborough in the east, and round about Gisburn, &c., in Craven, in the west. But, perhaps, a century or two more will put an end to it, and both the thing and name shall die. Vicarious ale is now more approved, and the *'ankard* almost everywhere politely preferred to the Churn.

This Churn (in our provincial pronunciation Kern) is the Hebrew Kern, קֶרֶן or Keren, from its being circular like most horns: and it is the latin *corona*, named so either from *radii*, resembling horns, as on some very antient coins, or from its encircling the head; so a ring of people is called *corona*. Also the Celtic Keren, Keron, or corn, which continues according to its old pronunciation in Cornwall, &c., and our modern word horn is no more than this; the antient hard sound of *k* in corn being

softened into the aspirate *h*, as has been done in numberless instances.

The Irish Celts also call a round stone, *clogh crene*, where the variation is merely dialectic. Hence, too, our crane-berries, i.e. round berries, from this Celtic adjective, *crene*, round.

N.B. The quotations from Scripture in Aram's original MS. were both in the Hebrew character, and their value in English sounds.

EUGENE ARAM.

BOOK I.

Τα. Φεῦ, φεῦ φρονεῖν ὡς δεινὸν ἔχθαι μὴ τέλει
 ἀέτι φρονεῖντε.

Οἱ. Τί δ' ἔστιν ; ὡς ἄθυμος εἰσελήλυθας.

Τα. Ἄφες μ' ἐς οἶκόντ' ῥᾶστα γάρ τὸ σὸν τε σὸ
 κἀγὼ διοίσω τοῦμἐν, ἢν ἔμοι πίθη.

ΟΙΔ. ΤΤΡ 316—321.

Τα. Alas! alas! how end it is to be wise, when it is not advantageous
to him who is so.

Οἱ. But what is the cause that you come hither and.

Τα. Dismiss me to my house. For both you will bear your fate easier
and I mine, if you take my advice.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

THE VILLAGE.—ITS INHABITANTS.—AN OLD MANOR-HOUSE, AND AN ENGLISH FAMILY; THEIR HISTORY, INVOLVING A MYSTERIOUS EVENT.

"Protected by the divinity they adored, supported by the earth which they cultivated, and at peace with themselves, they enjoyed the sweets of life without dreading or desiring dissolution."—NUMA POMPILIUS.

In the county of * * * * there is a sequestered hamlet, which I have often sought occasion to pass, and which I have never left without a certain reluctance and regret. The place, indeed, is associated with the memory of events that still retain a singular and fearful interest,—but the scene needs not the charm of legend to arrest the attention of the traveller. In no part of the world which it has been my lot to visit, have I seen a landscape of more pastoral beauty. The hamlet, to which I shall here give the name of Grassdale, is situated in a valley, which, for about the length of a mile, winds among gardens and orchards laden with fruit, between two chains of gentle and fertile hills.

Here, singly or in pairs, are scattered cottages, which bespeak a comfort and a rural luxury less often than our poets have described the characteristics of the English peasantry. It has been observed, that wherever you see a flower in a cottage garden, or a bird-cage at the cottage casement, you

may feel sure that the inmates are better and wiser than their neighbours; and such humble tokens of attention to something beyond the sterile labour of life were (we must now revert to the past) to be remarked in almost every one of the lowly abodes at Grassdale. The jasmine here,—there the rose or honeysuckle, clustered over the lattice and threshold, not so wildly as to testify negligence, but rather to sweeten the air than exclude the light. Each of the cottages possessed at its rear its plot of ground apportioned to the more useful and nutritious products of nature; while the greater part of them fenced also from the unfrequented road a little spot for the lupin, the sweet pea, the wallflower or the stock. And it is not unworthy of remark, that the bees came in greater clusters to Grassdale than to any other part of that rich and cultivated district. A small piece of waste land, which was intersected by a brook, fringed with osier and dwarf and

fantastic pollards, afforded pasture for a few cows and the only carrier's solitary horse. The stream itself was of no ignoble repute among the gentle craft of the Angle, the brotherhood whom our associations defend in the spite of our mercy; and this repute drew welcome and periodical itinerants to the village, who furnished it with its scanty news of the great world without, and maintained in a decorous custom the little and single hostelry of the place. Not that Peter Daultry, the proprietor of The Spotted Dog, was altogether contented to subsist upon the gains of his hospitable profession; he joined thereto the light cares of a small farm, held under a wealthy and an easy landlord; and being moreover honoured with the dignity of clerk to the parish, he was deemed by his neighbours a person of no small accomplishment, and no insignificant distinction. He was a little, dry, thin man, of a turn rather sentimental than jocose. A memory well stored with fragments of psalms, and hymns (which, being less familiar than the psalms to the ears of the villagers, were more than suspected to be his own composition,) often gave a poetic and semi-religious colouring to his conversation, which accorded rather with his dignity in the church than his post at The Spotted Dog. Yet he disliked not his joke, though it was subtle and delicate of nature; nor did he disdain to bear companionship over his own liquor with guests less gifted and refined.

In the centre of the village you chanced upon a cottage which had been lately whitewashed, where a certain preciseness in the owner might be detected in the clipped hedge, and the exact and newly mended stile by which you approached the habitation. Herein dwelt the beau and bachelor of the village, somewhat antiquated it is true, but still an object of great attention and some hope to the elder

damsels in the vicinity, and of a respectful popularity (that did not, however, prohibit a joke) among the younger. Jacob Bunting,—so was this gentleman called,—had been for many years in the king's service, in which he had risen to the rank of corporal, and had saved and pinched together a certain small independence, upon which he now rented his cottage and enjoyed his leisure. He had seen a good deal of the world, and profited in shrewdness by his experience; he had rubbed off, however, all superfluous devotion as he rubbed off his prejudices; and though he drank more often than any one else with the landlord of The Spotted Dog, there was not a wit in the place who showed so little indulgence to the publican's segments of psalmody. Jacob was a tall, comely, and perpendicular personage: his threadbare coat was scrupulously brushed, and his hair punctiliously plastered at the sides into two stiff obstinate-looking curls, and at the top into what he was pleased to call a feather, though it was much more like a tile. His conversation had in it something peculiar: generally it assumed a quick, short, abrupt turn, that, retrenching all superfluities of pronoun and conjunction, and marching at once upon the meaning of the sentence, had in it a military and Spartan significance, which betrayed how difficult it often is for a man to forget that he has been a corporal. Occasionally, indeed,—for where but in farces is the phraseology of the humorist always the same?—he escaped into a more enlarged and Christianlike method of dealing with the king's English; but that was chiefly noticeable when from conversation he launched himself into lecture,—a luxury the worthy soldier loved greatly to indulge, for much had he seen and somewhat had he reflected; and valuing himself, which

was odd in a corporal, more on his knowledge of the world than his knowledge even of war, he rarely missed any occasion of edifying a patient listener with the result of his observations.

After you had sauntered by the veteran's door, beside which you generally, if the evening were fine, or he was not drinking with neighbour headry, or taking his tea with gossip this or master that, or teaching some curious archness the broadsword exercise, or snaring trout in the stream, or in short, otherwise engaged, beside which, I say, you not unfrequently beheld him sitting on a rude bench, and enjoying with half-shut eyes, crossed legs, but still unindulgently erect posture, the luxury of his pipe; you ventured over a little wooden bridge, beneath which, clear and shallow, ran the rivulet we have before honourably mentioned, and a walk of a few minutes brought you to a moderately sized and old-fashioned mansion—the manor-house of the parish. It stood at the very foot of the hill, behind, a rich, ancient, and hanging wood, brought into relief the exceeding freshness and verdure of the patch of green meadow immediately in front. On one side, the garden was bounded by the village churchyard, with its simple mounds and its few scattered and humble tombs. The church was of great antiquity; and it was only in one point of view that you caught more than a glimpse of its grey tower and graceful spire, so thickly and so darkly grouped the yew-tree and the pine around the edifice. Opposite the gate by which you gained the house, the view was not extended, but rich with wood and pasture, backed by a hill, which, less verdant than its fellows, was covered with sheep; while you saw, hard by, the rivulet darkening and stealing away till your sight, though not your ear, lost it among the woodland.

Trained up the embrowned paling, on either side of the gate, were bushes of rustic fruit; and fruit and flowers (through plots of which green and winding alleys had been cut with no untasteful hand) testified, by their thriving and healthful looks, the care bestowed upon them. The main boasts of the garden were, on one side, a huge horse-chestnut tree—the largest in the village; and on the other, an arbour covered without with honeysuckles, and tapestried within by moss. The house, a grey and quaint building of the time of James I., with stone copings and gable roof, could scarcely in these days have been deemed a fitting residence for the lord of the manor. Nearly the whole of the centre was occupied by the hall, in which the meals of the family were commonly held—only two other sitting rooms of very moderate dimensions had been reserved by the architect for the convenience or ostentation of the proprietor. An ample porch jutted from the main building, and this was covered with ivy, as the sides of the windows were with jasmine and honeysuckle; while seats were ranged inside the porch carved with many a rude initial and long-past date.

The owner of this mansion bore the name of Rowland Lester. His forefathers, without pretending to high antiquity of family, had held the dignity of squires of Grassdale for some two centuries; and Rowland Lester was perhaps the first of the race who had stirred above fifty miles from the house in which each successive lord had received his birth, or the green churchyard in which was yet chronicled his death. The present proprietor was a man of cultivated tastes, and abilities, naturally not much above mediocrity, had been improved by travel as well as study. Himself and one younger brother had been early left masters of their fate and their several portions. The young

Geoffrey, testified a roving and dissipated turn. Bold, licentious, extravagant, unprincipled—his career soon outstripped the slender fortunes of a cadet in the family of a country squire. He was early thrown into difficulties, but by some means or other they never seemed to overwhelm him; an unexpected turn—a lucky adventure—presented itself at the very moment when Fortune appeared the most utterly to have deserted him.

Among these more propitious fluctuations in the tide of affairs, was, at about the age of forty, a sudden marriage with a young lady of what might be termed (for Geoffrey Lester's rank of life, and the rational expenses of that day) a very competent and respectable fortune. Unhappily, however, the lady was neither handsome in feature nor gentle in temper; and, after a few years of quarrel and contest, the faithless husband, one bright morning, having collected in his proper person whatever remained of their fortune, absconded from the conjugal hearth without either warning or farewell. He left nothing to his wife but his house, his debts, and his only child, a son. From that time to the present little had been known, though much had been conjectured, concerning the deserter. For the first few years they traced, however, so far of his fate as to learn that he had been seen once in India; and that previously he had been met in England by a relation, under the disguise of assumed names: a proof that whatever his occupations, they could scarcely be very respectable. But, of late, nothing whatsoever relating to the wanderer had transpired. By some he was imagined dead; by most he was forgotten. Those more immediately connected with him—his brother in especial—cherished a secret belief, that wherever Geoffrey Lester should chance to alight, the manner of alighting would (so use the signi-

ficant and homely metaphor) be always on his legs: and coupling the wonted luck of the scapegrace with the fact of his having been seen in India, Rowland in his heart not only hoped, but fully expected, that the lost one would, some day or other, return home laden with the spoils of the East, and eager to shower upon his relatives, in recompense of long desertion,

"With richest hand . . . barbaric pearl and gold."

But we must return to the forsaken spouse. Left in this abrupt destitution and distress, Mrs. Lester had only the resource of applying to her brother-in-law, whom indeed the fugitive had before seized many opportunities of not leaving wholly unprepared for such an application. Rowland promptly and generously obeyed the summons: he took the child and the wife to his own home; he freed the latter from the persecutions of all legal claimants; and, after selling such effects as remained, he devoted the whole proceeds to the forsaken family, without regarding his own expenses on their behalf, ill as he was able to afford the luxury of that self-neglect. The wife did not long need the asylum of his hearth,—she, poor lady, died of a slow fever produced by irritation and disappointment, a few months after Geoffrey's desertion. She had no need to recommend her child to his kind-hearted uncle's care. And now we must glance over the elder brother's domestic fortunes.

In Rowland, the wild dispositions of his brother were so far tamed, that they assumed only the character of a buoyant temper and a gay spirit. He had strong principles as well as warm feelings, and a fine and resolute sense of honour utterly impervious to attack. It was impossible to be in his company an hour and not see that he was a man to be respected. It

was equally impossible to live with him a week and not see that he was a man to be beloved. He also had married, and about a year after that era in the life of his brother, but not for the same advantage of fortune. He had formed an attachment to the portionless daughter of a man in his own neighbourhood and of his own rank. He wooed and won her, and for a few years he enjoyed that greatest happiness which the world is capable of bestowing—the society and the love of one in whom we could wish for no change, and beyond whom we have no desire. But what Evil cannot corrupt, Fate seldom spares. A few months after the birth of a second daughter, the young wife of Rowland Lester died. It was to a widowed hearth that the wife and child of his brother came for shelter. Rowland was a man of an affectionate and warm heart; if the blow did not crush, at least it changed him. Naturalty of a cheerful and ardent disposition, his mood now became more sober and sedate. He shrunk from the rural pastimes and companionship he had before courted and relished, and, for the first time in his life, the mourner felt the loneliness of solitude. As his nephew and his motherless daughters grew up, they gave an object to his exclusion and a relief to his reflections. He found a pure and unfailing delight in watching the growth of their young minds, and guiding their differing dispositions; and as time at length enabled them to return his affection, and appreciate his cares, he became once more sensible that he had a home.

The elder of his daughters, Madeline, at the time our story opens, had attained the age of eighteen. She was the beauty and the boast of the whole country. Above the ordinary height, her figure was richly and capriciously formed. So transcendently pure and soft was her complexion, that it might have seemed the token of delicate

health, but for the dewy redness of her lips, and the freshness of teeth whiter than pearls. Her eyes, of a deep blue, wore a thoughtful and serene expression; and her forehead, higher and broader than it usually is in women, gave promise of a certain nobleness of intellect, and added dignity, but a feminine dignity, to the more tender characteristics of her beauty. And, indeed, the peculiar tone of Madeline's mind fulfilled the indication of her features, and was eminently thoughtful and high wrought. She had early testified a remarkable love for study, and not only a desire for knowledge, but a veneration for those who possessed it. The remote corner of the county in which they lived, and the rarely broken seclusion which Lester habitually preserved from the intercourse of their few and scattered neighbours, had naturally cast each member of the little circle upon his or her own resources. An accident, some five years ago, had confined Madeline for several weeks, or rather months, to the house; and as the old Hall possessed a very respectable share of books, she had then matured and confirmed that love for reading and reflection which she had at a yet earlier period prematurely evinced. The woman's tendency to romance naturally directed her meditations, and thus, while they dignified, they also softened her mind. Her sister Elliner, younger by two years, was of a character equally gentle, but less elevated. She looked up to her sister as a superior being. She felt pride, without a shadow of envy, for Madeline's superior and surpassing beauty; and was unconsciously guided in her pursuits and predilections by a mind which she cheerfully acknowledged to be better than her own. And yet Elliner had also her pretensions to personal brightness, and pretensions perhaps that would be less reluctantly acknowledged by her own sex than those of

her sister. The sunlight of a happy and innocent heart sparkled on her face, and gave a beam it gladdened you to behold to her quick hazel eye, and a smile that broke out from a thousand dimples. She did not possess the height of Madeline, and though not so slender as to be curtailed of the roundness and feminine luxuriance of beauty, her shape was slimmer, feebler, and less rich in its symmetry than her sister's. And this the tendency of the physical frame to require elsewhere support, nor to feel secure of strength, perhaps influenced her mind, and made love, and the dependence of love, more necessary to her than to the thoughtful and lofty Madeline. The latter might pass through life, and never see the one to whom her heart could give itself away. But every village might possess a hero whom the imagination of Ellinor could clothe with unreal graces, and towards whom the lovingness of her disposition might bias her affections. Both, however, eminently possessed that earnestness and purity of heart which would have made them, perhaps in an equal degree, constant

and devoted to the object of an attachment once formed in defiance of change, and to the brink of death.

Their cousin Walter, Geoffrey Lester's son, was now in his twenty-first year; tall and strong of person, and with a face, if not regularly handsome, striking enough to be generally deemed so. High-spirited, bold, wary, impatient; jealous of the affections of those he loved; cheerful to outward seeming, but restless, fond of change, and subject to the melancholy and pining mood common to young and ardent minds; such was the character of Walter Lester. The estates of Lester were settled in the same line, and devolved therefore upon him. Yet there were moments when he keenly felt his orphan and deserted situation; and sighed to think that, while his father perhaps yet lived, he was a dependant for affection, if not for maintenance, on the kindness of others. This reflection sometimes gave an air of sullenness or petulance to his character, that did not really belong to it. For what in the world makes a man of just pride appear so unamiable as the sense of dependence?

CHAPTER II.

A PUBLICAN, A SINNER, AND A STRANGER.

"Ah, Don Alphonso, is it you? Agreeable accident! Chance presents you to my eyes where you were least expected."—*Gil Blas.*

It was an evening in the beginning of summer, and Peter Deatry and the *credent* corporal sat beneath the sign of The Spotted Dog as it hung motionless from the bough of a friendly elm, quaffing a cup of boon companionship. The reader will imagine the two men very different from each other in form and aspect; the one short, dry, fragile, and betraying a love of ease in his unbuttoned vest, and a certain bellying, sea-sailing method of balancing his body upon his chair; the other, erect and solemn, and as steady on his seat as if he were nailed to it. It was a fine, tranquil, balmy evening; the sun had just set, and the clouds still retained the rosy tints which they had caught from its parting ray. Here and there, at scattered intervals, you might see the cottages peeping from the trees around them; or mark the smoke that rose from their roofs—roofs green with mosses and house-look,—in graceful and spiral curls against the clear soft air. It was an English scene, and the two men, the dog at their feet (for Peter Deatry favoured a wiry stone-coloured cur, which he called a *terrier*), and just at the door of the little inn, two old gossips, loitering on the threshold, in familiar chat with the landlady in cap and kerchief,—all together made a group equally English, and somewhat picturesque, though homely enough, in effect.

"Well, now," said Peter Deatry, as he pushed the brown jug towards

the corporal, "this is what I call pleasant; it puts me in mind ——"

"Of what?" quoth the corporal.

"Of those nice lines in the hymn, Master Bunting:—

How fair ye are, ye little hills;

Ye little fields also;

Ye meandering streams that sweetly run

Ye willows in a row!"

There is something very comfortable in sacred verses, Master Bunting; but you're a settler."

"Psha, man!" said the corporal, throwing out his right leg and leaning back, with his eyes half shut, and his chin protruded, as he took an unusually long inhalation from his pipe. "Psha, man!—send verses to the right-about—fit for girls going to school on a Sunday; full-grown men mare up to stuff. I've seen the world, Master Deatry;—the world, and he d ——d to you!—augh!"

"Pie, neighbour, fie! What's the good of profaneness, evil speaking, and slandering!—

Oaths are the debts your spendthrift soul must pay!

All oaths are chalk'd against the reckoning day."

Just wait a bit, neighbour; wait till I light my pipe."

"Tell you what," said the corporal, after he had communicated from his own pipe the friendly flame to his comrade's, "tell you what—talk non sense; the commander in chief's no martinet—if we're all right in action, he'll wink at a slip word or two.

Come, no hauberg—hold jaw. I've think God would sooner have a snivelling fellow like you in his regiment, than a man like me, clean-kimbed, straight as a dart, six feet one without his shoes!—Haugh!

This notion of the corporal's, by which he would have likened the dominion of heaven to the King of Prussia's body-guard, and only admitted the erect on account of their inches, so tickled mine host's fancy, that he leaned back in his chair and indulged in a long, dry, obstreperous cackling. This irreverence mightily displeased the corporal. He looked at the little man very sourly, and said in his least smooth accentuation,—

"What—devil—cackling at!—Always grin, grin, grin—giggle, giggle, giggle—peha!"

"Why really, neighbour," said Peter, composing himself, "you must let a man laugh now and then."

"Man!" said the corporal; "man's a noble animal! Man's a musket, primed, loaded, ready to save a friend or kill a foe—charge not to be wasted on every tom-tit. But you! not a musket, but a cracker! noisy, harmless, can't touch you, but off you go, whizz, pop, bang in one's face!—haugh!"

"Well!" said the good-humoured landlord, "I should think Master Aram, the great scholar who lives down the vale yonder, a man quite after your own heart. He is grave enough to suit you. He does not laugh very easily, I fancy."

"After my heart! Stoops like a bow."

"Indeed he does look on the ground as he walks; when I think, I do the same. But what a marvellous man it is! I hear that he reads the Psalms in Hebrew. He's very affable and meek like for such a scholar."

"Tell you what. Seen the world, Master Dealtry, and know a thing or two. Your shy dog is always a deep

one. Give me a man who looks me in the face as he would a cannon!"

"Or a lass," said Peter, knowingly.

The grim corporal smiled.

"Talking of lasses," said the soldier, refilling his pipe, "what creature Miss Lester is! Such eyes!—such nose! Fit for a colonel, by Gad! ay or a major-general!"

"For my part, I think Miss Ellinger almost as handsome; not so grand-like, but more lovelsome."

"Nice little thing!" said the corporal, condescendingly. "But zooks! whom have we here!"

This last question was applied to a man who was slowly turning from the road towards the inn. The stranger, for such he was, was stout, thick-set, and of middle height. His dress was not without pretension to a rank higher than the lowest; but it was threadbare and worn, and soiled with dust and travel. His appearance was by no means prepossessing: small sunken eyes of a light hazel, and a restless and rather fierce expression; a thick flat nose, high cheek-bones, a large bony jaw from which the flesh receded, and a bull throat indicative of great strength, constituted his claims to personal attraction. The stately corporal, without moving, kept a vigilant and suspicious eye upon the new comer, muttering to Peter,—
"Customer for you; rum customer too—by Gad!"

The stranger now reached the little table, and halting short took up the brown jug, without ceremony or preface, and emptied it at a draught.

The corporal stared—the corporal frowned: but before—for he was somewhat slow of speech—he had time to vent his displeasure, the stranger, wiping his mouth with his sleeve, said, in rather a civil and apologetic tone,—

"I beg pardon, gentlemen. I have had a long march of it, and very tired I am."

"Humph! march!" said the corporal, whose aspect was appalled: "not in his Majesty's service—eh?"

"Not now," answered the traveller; then, turning round to Dooltry, he said,—"Are you landlord here?"

"At your service," said Peter, with the indifference of a man well to do, and not ambitious of halfpence.

"Come, then, quick—hodge," said the traveller, tapping him on the back—"bring more glasses—another jug of the October; and anything or everything your lander is able to produce—d'ye hear?"

Peter, by no means pleased with the briskness of this address, eyed the dusty and way-worn pedestrian from head to foot; then, looking over his shoulder towards the door, he said, as he encouraged himself yet more firmly on his seat—

"There's my wife by the door, friend; go, tell her what you want."

"Do you know," said the traveller, in a slow and measured accent—"Do you know, master Shrivelface, that I have more than half a mind to break your head for impertinence! You a landlord—you keep an inn, indeed! Come, sir, make off, or—"

"Corporal!—corporal!" cried Peter, retreating hastily from his seat as the brawny traveller approached menacingly towards him—"You won't see the peace broken. Have a care, friend—have a care. I'm clerk to the parish—clerk to the parish, sir—and I'll indict you for sacrilege."

The wooden fastenings of Bunting relaxed into a sort of grin at the alarm of his friend. He pulled away, without making any reply; meanwhile the traveller, taking advantage of Peter's hasty abandonment of his orthodoxian accommodation, seized the vacant chair, and drawing it yet closer to the table, flung himself upon it, and placing his hat on the table, wiped his brow with the air of a man about to make himself thoroughly at home.

Peter Dooltry was assuredly a personage of plausible disposition; but then he had the proper pride of a host and a clerk. His feelings were exceedingly wounded at this cavalier treatment; before the very eyes of his wife, too—what an example! He thrust his hands deep into his breeches' pockets, and strutting with a furious swagger towards the traveller, he said,—

"Harkye, sirrah! This is not the way folks are treated in this country; and I'd have you to know, that I'm a man what has a brother a constable."

"Well, sir!"

"Well, sir, indeed! Well!—Sir, it's not well, by no manner of means; and if you don't pay for the ale you drank, and go quietly about your business, I'll have you put in the stocks for a vagrant."

This, the most menacing speech Peter Dooltry was ever known to deliver, was uttered with so much spirit, that the corporal, who had hitherto preserved silence—for he was too strict a disciplinarian to thrust himself unnecessarily into brawls,—turned approvingly round, and nodding as well as his stock would suffer him at the indignant Peter, he said, "Well done! 'fegs—you've a soul, man!—a soul fit for the forty-second!—ugh!—A soul above the inches of five that two!"

There was something bitter and sneering in the traveller's aspect as he now, regarding Dooltry, repeated,—

"Vagrant!—humph! And pray what is a vagrant?"

"What is a vagrant?" echoed Peter, a little puzzled.

"You! answer me that."

"Why, a vagrant is a man what wanders, and what has no money."

"Prudy," said the stranger smiling, but the smile by no means improved his physiognomy. "an excellent definition; but one which, I will convince you, does not apply to me." So saying, he drew from his pocket a

handful of silver coins, and, throwing them on the table, added, "Come, let's have no more of this. You see I can pay for what I order; and now, do recollect that I am a weary and hungry man."

No sooner did Peter behold the money, than a sudden placidity stole over his ruffled spirit—nay, a certain benevolent commiseration for the fatigue and wants of the traveller replaced at once, and as by a spell, the angry feelings that had previously roused him.

"Weary and hungry," said he; "why did not you say that before? That would have been quite enough for Peter Dealtry. Thank Heaven! I am a man what can feel for my neighbours. I have bowels—yes, I have bowels. Weary and hungry!—you shall be served in an instant. I may be a little hasty or so, but I'm a good Christian at bottom—ask the corporal. And what says the Psalmist, Psalm 147—

"By Him, the beasts that loosely range
With timely feed are fed;
He speaks the word, and what he wills
Is done as soon as said."

Animating his kindly emotions by this apt quotation, Peter turned to the house. The corporal now broke silence: the sight of the money had not been without an effect upon him as well as the landlord.

"Warm day, sir,—your health. Oh! forgot you emptied jug—haugh! You said you were not *not* in his Majesty's service: beg pardon—were you ever?"

"Why, once I was, many years ago."

"Ah!—and what regiment? I was in the forty-second. Heard of the forty-second? Colonel's name Dysart; captain's, Trotter; corporal's, Bunting, at your service."

"I am much obliged by your confidence," said the traveller, drily. "I dare say you have seen much service."

"Service! Ah! may well say that—twenty-three years' hard work, and not the better for it! A man that loves his country is tied to a pension; that's my mind! But the world don't smile upon corporals—ugh!"

Here Peter reappeared with a fresh supply of the October, and an assurance that the cold meat would speedily follow.

"I hope yourself and this gentleman will bear me company," said the traveller, passing the jug to the corporal; and in a few moments so well pleased grew the trio with each other, that the sound of their laughter came loud and frequent to the ears of the good housewife within.

The traveller now seemed to the corporal and mine host a right jolly, good humoured fellow. Not, however, that he bore a fair share in the conversation—he rather promoted the hilarity of his new acquaintances than led it. He laughed heartily at Peter's jests, and the corporal's repartees; and the latter, by degrees assuming the usual way he bore in the circles of the village, contrived, before the viands were on the table, to monopolise the whole conversation.

The traveller found in the repast a new excuse for silence. He ate with a most prodigious and most contagious appetite; and in a few seconds the knife and fork of the corporal were as busily engaged as if he had only three minutes to spare between a march and a dinner.

"This is a pretty retired spot," quoth the traveller, as at length he finished his repast, and threw himself back on his chair—"a very pretty spot. Whose neat old fashioned house was that I passed on the green, with the gable-ends and the flower-pots in front?"

"Oh, the squire's," answered Peter. "Squire Lester's an excellent gentleman."

"A rich man, I should think, for these parts; the best house I have seen for some miles," said the stranger carelessly.

"Rich?—yes, he's well to do; he does not live so as not to have money to lay by."

"Any family?"

"Two daughters and a nephew."

"And the nephew does not ruin him?—Happy uncle! Mine was not so lucky!" said the traveller.

"Bad fellows we soldiers in our young days!" observed the corporal with a wink. "No, Squire Walter's a good young man, a pride to his uncle."

"So," said the pedestrian, "they are not forced to keep up a large establishment and ruin themselves by a retinue of servants!"—Corporal, the fact."

"Nay!" said Peter, "Squire Lester's gate is always open to the poor, but as for show, he leaves that to my lord at the castle."

"The castle! where's that?"

"About six miles off; you've heard of my Lord * * * *, I'll swear."

"Ay, to be sure—a courtier. But who else lives about here? I mean, who are the principal persons, barring the corporal and yourself—Mr. Richery, I think our friend here calls you."

"Deedry, Peter Deedry, sir, is my name. Why, the most noticeable man, you must know, is a great, wheel-headed, wonderfully-beamed man; there yonder, you may just catch a glimpse of the tall wheel-head;—and he has burnt out on the top of his house, that he may get nearer to the stars. He has got glasses by which I've heard that you may see the people in the moon walking on their heads! but I can't say as I believe all I hear."

"You are too sensible for that, I'm sure. But this soldier, I suppose, is not very rich; learning does not clothe men nowadays—eh, corporal?"

"And why should it! Zounds! can it teach a man how to defend his country? Old England wants soldiers, and he d—d to them! But the man 's well enough, I must own, civil, modest——"

"And not by no means a beggar," added Peter; "he gave as much to the poor last winter as the squire himself."

"Indeed!" said the stranger: "this scholar is rich then?"

"So, so; neither one nor t'other. But if he were as rich as my lord, he could not be more respected; the greatest folks in the country come in their carriages and four to see him. Lord bless you! there is not a name more talked on in the whole county than Eugene Aram."

"What!" cried the traveller, his countenance changing as he sprang from his seat; "What!—Aram! did you say Aram! Great God! how strange!"

Peter, not a little startled by the abruptness and vehemence of his guest, stared at him with open mouth, and even the corporal involuntarily took his pipe from his lips.

"What!" said the former, "you know him, do you? You've heard of him, eh?"

The stranger did not reply; he seemed lost in a reverie; he muttered inaudible words between his teeth; now he strode two steps forward, clenching his hands; now smiled grimly; and then returning to his seat, threw himself on it, still in a trance. The soldier and the clerk exchanged looks, and now outspoke the corporal,

"Egad tantrums! What the devil! did the man eat your grandmother!"

Recoiled perhaps by so pertinent and sensible a question, the stranger lifted his head from his breast, and said, with a forced smile, "You have done me, without knowing it, a great kindness, my friend, Eugene Aram

was an early and intimate acquaintance of mine, we have not met for many years. I never guessed that he lived in these parts; indeed I did not know where he resided. I am truly glad to think I have lighted upon him thus unexpectedly."

"What! you did not know where he lived! Well, I thought all the world knew that! Why, men from the universities have come all the way, merely to look at the spot."

"Very likely," returned the stranger; "but I am not a learned man myself, and what is celebrity in one set is obscurity in another. Besides, I have never been in this part of the world before!"

Peter was about to reply, when he heard the shrill voice of his wife behind.

"Why don't you rise, Mr. Lazyboots? Where are your eyes! Don't you see the young ladies?"

Dealtry's hat was off in an instant, — the stiff corporal rose like a musket; the stranger would have kept his seat, but Dealtry gave him an admonitory tug by the collar; accordingly he rose, muttering a hasty oath, which certainly died on his lips when he saw the cause which had thus constrained him into courtesy.

Through a little gate close by Peter's house Madeline and her sister had just passed on their evening walk, and with the kind familiarity for which they were both noted, they had stopped to salute the landlady of The Spotted Dog, as she now, her labours done, sat by the threshold, within hearing of the convivial group, and plaiting straw. The whole family of Lester were so beloved, that we question whether my lord himself, as the great nobleman of the place was always called (as if there were only one lord in the peerage), would have obtained the same degree of respect that was always lavished upon them.

"Don't let us disturb your good

people," said Elminor, as they now moved towards the boon companions; when her eye suddenly falling on the stranger, she stopped short. There was something in his appearance, and especially in the expression of his countenance at that moment, which no one could have marked for the first time without apprehension and distrust; and it was so seldom that, in that retired spot, the young ladies encountered even one unfamiliar face, that the effect the stranger's appearance might have produced on any one, might well be increased for them to a startling and painful degree. The traveller saw at once the sensation he had created; his brow lowered; and the same unpleasant smile, or rather sneer, that we have noted before, distorted his lip, as with affected humility he made his obeisance.

"How! — a stranger!" said Madeline, sharing, though in a less degree, the feelings of her sister; and then, after a pause, she said, as she glanced over his garb, "not in distress I hope?"

"No, madam!" said the stranger; "if by distress is meant beggary. I am in *all* respects, perhaps, better than I seem."

There was a general titter from the corporal, my host, and his wife, at the traveller's semi-jest at his own unprepossessing appearance: but Madeline, a little disconcerted, bowed hastily, and drew her sister away.

"A proud queen!" said the stranger, as he recreated himself and watched the sisters gliding across the green.

All mouths were opened against him immediately. He found it no easy matter to make his peace; and before he had quite done it, he called for his bill, and rose to depart.

"Well!" said he, as he tendered his hand to the corporal, "we may meet again, and enjoy together some more

of your good stories. Meanwhile, which is my way to this—this famous scholar's!—Ehem!"

"Why," quoth Peter, "you saw the direction in which the young ladies went; you must take the same. Cross the stile you will find at the right—wind along the foot of the hill for about three parts of a mile, and you will then see in the middle of a broad plain a lonely grey house, with a thingumbob at the top; a servatory they call it. That's Master Aram's."

"Thank you."

"And a very pretty walk it is too," said the dame, "the prettiest hereabouts to my liking, till you get to the house at least, and so the young ladies think, for it's their usual walk every evening."

"Humph, then I may meet them."

"Well, and if you do, make yourself look as Christian like as you can," asserted the hostess.

There was a second grin at the ill-favoured traveller's expense, amidst which he went his way.

"An odd chap!" said Peter, looking after the sturdy form of the traveller. "I wonder what he is; he seems well educated—makes use of good words."

"What sinnifies," said the corporal, who felt a sort of fellow-feeling for his new acquaintance's bluntness of manner; "what sinnifies what he is! Served his country,—that's enough;—never told me, by the by, his regiment;—set me a talking, and let out nothing himself;—old soldier every inch of him!"

"He can take care of number one," said Peter. "How he emptied the jug! and, my stars! what an appetite!"

"Tush," said the corporal, "hold jaw. Man of the world—man of the world,—that's clear."

CHAPTER III.

A DIALOGUE AND AN ALARM.—A STUDENT'S HOUSE.

"A fellow by the hand of Nature marked.

Quoted, and signed, to do a deed of shame."

SHAKESPEARE: *King John*.

* * * *

"He is a scholar, if a man may trust

The liberal voice of Fame, in her report.

* * * *

Myself was once a student, and indeed

Fed with the self-same humour in is now."

BEN JONSON: *Every Man in his Humour*.

THE two sisters pursued their walk along a scene which might well be favoured by their selection. No sooner had they crossed the stile, than the village seemed vanished into earth: so quiet, so lonely, so far from the evidence of life was the landscape through which they passed. On their right sloped a green and silent hill, shutting out all view beyond itself, save the deepening and twilight sky; to the left, and immediately along their road, lay fragments of stone, covered with moss, or shadowed by wild shrubs, that here and there gathered into copses, or breaking abruptly away from the rich sod, left frequent spaces through which you caught long vistas of forest-land, or the brooklet gliding in a noisy and rocky course, and breaking into a thousand tiny waterfalls or mimic eddies. So secluded was the scene, and so unwitnessing of cultivation, that you would not have believed that a human habitation could be at hand, and this air of perfect solitude and quiet gave an additional charm to the spot.

"But I assure you," said Ellinor, earnestly continuing a conversation they had begun, "I assure you I was

not mistaken: I saw it as plainly as I see you."

"What, in the breast-pocket?"

"Yes, as he drew out his handkerchief, I saw the barrel of the pistol quite distinctly."

"Indeed! I think we had better tell my father as soon as we get home; it may be as well to be on our guard: though robbery, I believe, has not been heard of in Grassdale for these twenty years."

"Yet for what purpose, save that of evil, could he, in these peaceable times and this peaceable country, carry firearms about him? And what a countenance! Did you note the shy, and yet ferocious eye, like that of some animal that longs, yet fears to spring upon you?"

"Upon my word, Ellinor," said Madeline, smiling, "you are not very merciful to strangers. After all, the man might have provided himself with the pistol which you saw as a natural precaution; reflect that, as a stranger, he may well not know how safe this district usually is, and he may have come from London, in the neighbourhood of which they say robberies have been frequent of late. As to his looks, they are, I own, unpar-

donable, for so much ugliness there can be no excuse. Had the man been as handsome as our cousin Walter, you would not, perhaps, have been so comfortable in your fears at the pistol."

"Nonsense, Madeline," said Ellinor, blushing and turning away her face: there was a moment's pause, which the younger sister broke.

"We do not seem," said she, "to make much progress in the friendship of our singular neighbour. I never knew my father court any one so much as he has courted Mr. Aram, and yet you see how seldom he calls upon us,—nay, I often think that he seeks to shun us; no great compliment to our attractions, Madeline!"

"I regret his want of sociability, for his own sake," said Madeline; "for he seems melancholy as well as thoughtful; and he leads so secluded a life, that I cannot but think my father's conversation and society, if he would but encourage it, might afford some relief to his solitude."

"And he always seems," observed Ellinor, "to take pleasure in my father's conversation,—as who would not? How his countenance lights up when he converses! it is a pleasure to watch it. I think him positively handsome when he speaks."

"Oh, more than handsome!" said Madeline, with enthusiasm; "with that high pale brow, and those deep, indefinable eyes."

Ellinor smiled, and it was now Madeline's turn to blush.

"Well," said the former, "there is something about him that fills one with an indescribable interest; and his manner, if cold at times, is yet always so gentle."

"And to hear him converse," said Madeline, "it is like music. His thoughts, his very words, seem so different from the language and ideas of others. What a pity that he should ever be silent!"

No. 62.

"There is one peculiarity about his gloom, it never inspires one with distrust," said Ellinor; "if I had observed him in the same circumstances as that ill-omened traveller, I should have had no apprehension."

"Ah! that traveller still runs in your head. If we were to meet him on this spot!"

"Heaven forbid!" cried Ellinor, turning hastily round in alarm,—and, lo! as if her sister had been a prophet, she saw the very person in question, at some little distance behind them, and walking on with rapid strides.

She uttered a faint shriek of surprise and terror, and Madeline, looking back at the sound, immediately participated in her alarm. The spot looked so desolate and lonely, and the imagination of both had been already so worked upon by Ellinor's fears, and their conjectures respecting the ill-omened weapon she had witnessed, that a thousand apprehensions of outrage and murder crowded at once upon the minds of the two sisters. Without, however, giving vent in words to their alarm, they quickened their pace involuntarily, every moment stealing a glance behind, to watch the progress of the suspected robber. They thought that he also seemed to accelerate his movements; and this observation increased their terror, and would appear, indeed, to give it some more rational ground.

At length, as by a sudden turn of the road, they lost sight of the dreaded stranger, their alarm suggested to them but one resolution, and they fairly fled on as fast as the fear which actuated would allow them. The nearest, and indeed the only house in that direction, was Aram's; but they both imagined if they could come within sight of that, they should be safe. They looked back at every interval; now they did not see their famed pursuer—now he emerged

again into view—now—yes, he also was running. “Faster—faster, Madeline, for God’s sake! he is gaining upon us!” cried Ellinor. The path grew more wild, and the trees more thick and frequent; at every cluster that marked their progress, they saw the stranger closer and closer, at length a sudden break—a sudden turn in the landscape,—a broad plain burst upon them, and in the midst of it the student’s solitary abode!

“Thank Heaven we are safe!” cried Madeline. She turned once more to look for the stranger; in so doing, her foot struck against a fragment of stone, and she fell with great violence to the ground. She endeavoured to rise, but found herself, at first, unable to stir from the spot. In this state, however, she looked back, and saw the traveller at some little distance. But he also halted, and, after a moment’s seeming deliberation, turned aside, and was lost among the bushes.

With great difficulty Ellinor now assisted Madeline to rise; her ankle was violently sprained, and she could not put her foot to the ground; but though she had evinced so much dread at the apparition of the stranger, she now testified an almost equal degree of fortitude in bearing pain. “I am not much hurt, Ellinor,” she said, faintly smiling, to encourage her sister, who supported her in speechless alarm: “but what is to be done? I cannot use this foot. How shall we get home?”

“But are you sure you are not much hurt?” said poor Ellinor, almost crying; “lean on me—heavier—pray! Only try and reach the house, and we can then stay there till Mr. Aram sends home for the carriage.”

“But what will he think! how strange it will seem!” said Madeline, the colour once more visiting her cheek, which a moment since had been blanched as pale as death.

“Is this a time for scruples and

ceremony?” said Ellinor. “Come! I entreat you, come; if you linger thus, the man may take courage and attack us yet. There! that’s right! Is the pain very great?”

“I do not mind the pain,” murmured Madeline; “but if he should think we intrude! His habits are so reserved—so secluded; indeed I fear——”

“Intrude!” interrupted Ellinor. “Do you think so ill of him?—Do you suppose that, hermit as he is, he has lost common humanity? But lean more on me, dearest; you do not know how strong I am!”

Thus alternately chiding, caressing, and encouraging her sister, Ellinor led on the sufferer, till they had crossed the plain, though with slowness and labour, at d stood before the porch of the recluse’s house. They had looked back from time to time, but the cause of so much alarm appeared no more. This they deemed a sufficient evidence of the justice of their apprehensions.

Madeline even now would fain have detained her sister’s hand from the bell that hung without the porch half imbedded in ivy; but Ellinor, out of patience—as she well might be—with her sister’s unseasonable prudery, refused any longer delay. So singularly still and solitary was the plain around the house, that the sound of the bell breaking the silence had in it something startling, and appeared, in its sudden and shrill voice, a profanation of the deep tranquillity of the spot. They did not wait long—a step was heard within—the door was slowly unbarred, and the student himself stood before them.

He was a man who might, perhaps, have numbered some five and thirty years; but, at a hasty glance, he would have seemed considerably younger. He was above the ordinary stature; though a gentle, and not ungraceful

land in the neck, rather than the shoulders, somewhat curtailed his proper advantage of height. His frame was thin and slender, but well kept and her proportioned. Nature had originally cast his form in an athletic mould; but sedentary habits, and the wear of mind, seemed somewhat to have impaired her gifts. His cheek was pale and delicate; yet it was rather the delivery of thought than of weak health. His hair, which was long, and of a rich and deep brown, was thrown back from his face and temples, and left a broad, high, majestic forehead utterly unrelieved and bare; and on the brow there was not a single wrinkle; it was as smooth as it might have been some fifteen years ago. There was a singular calmness, and, so to speak, profundity of thought, eloquent upon its clear surface, which suggested the idea of one who had passed his life rather in contemplation than emotion. It was a face that a physiognomist would have loved to look upon, so much did it speak both of the refinement and the dignity of intellect.

Such was the person—if pictures convey a faithful resemblance—of a man, certainly among the most eminent in his day for various and profound learning, and especially for a power wholly self taught, yet never contented to repose upon the wonderful stores it had laboriously accumulated.

He now stood before the two girls, silent, and evidently surprised; and it would have been no un worthy subject for a picture—that vivid patch—that still spot—Madeline's smiling and subdued form and downcast eyes—the eager face of Elliner, about to narrate the nature and cause of their intrusion—and the pale radiant bloom of Ellen, suddenly aroused from her solitary meditations, and converted into the protector of beauty.

No sooner did Aram learn from

Elliner the outline of their story, and Madeline's accident, than his countenance and manner testified the liveliest and most eager interest. Madeline was inexpressibly touched and surprised at the kindly and respectful earnestness with which this reserved scholar, usually so cold and abstracted in mood, assisted and led her into the house; the sympathy he expressed for her pain—the sincerity of his tone—the compassion of his eyes—and as those dark, and, to use her own thought, unfathomable orbs, bent admiringly and yet so gently upon her, Madeline, even in spite of her pain, felt an indescribable, a delicious thrill at her heart, which in the presence of no one else had she ever experienced before.

Aram now summoned the only domestic his house possessed, who appeared in the form of an old woman, whom he seemed to have selected from the whole neighbourhood as the person most in keeping with the rigid seclusion he preserved. She was exceedingly deaf, and was a proverb in the village for her extreme taciturnity. Poor old Margaret! she was a widow, and had lost ten children by early deaths. There was a time when her gaiety had been, as noticeable as her reserve was now. In spite of her infirmity, she was not slow in comprehending the accident. Madeline had met with, and she busied herself with a promptness which showed that her misfortunes had not deadened her natural kindness of disposition, in preparing fomentations and bandages for the wounded foot.

Meanwhile Aram undertook to seek the nearest home, and bring back the old family coach, which had stood inactive in its shelter for the last six months, to convey the suffering home.

"No, Mr. Aram," said Madeline, colouring; "pray do not go yourself; consider, the man may still be better."

on the road. He is armed: good heavens! if he should meet you!"

"Fear not, madam," said Aram, with a faint smile. "I also keep arms, even in this obscure and safe retreat; and to satisfy you, I will not neglect to carry them with me."

As he spoke, he took from the wainscot, where they hung, a brace of large horse pistols, slung them round him by a leather belt, and flinging over his person, to conceal weapons so alarming to any less dangerous passenger he might encounter, the long cloak then usually worn in inclement seasons, as an outer garment, he turned to depart.

"But are they loaded?" asked Ellinor.

Aram answered briefly in the affirmative. It was somewhat singular, but the sisters did not then remark it, that a man so peaceable in his pursuits, and seemingly possessed of no valuables that could tempt cupidity, should in that spot, where crime was never heard of, use such habitual precaution.

When the door closed upon him, and while the old woman relieved the anguish of the sprain with a light hand and soothing lotions, which she had shown some skill in preparing, Madeline cast glances of interest and curiosity around the apartment into which she had had the rare good fortune to obtain admittance.

The house had belonged to a family of some note, whose heirs had outstripped their fortunes. It had been long deserted and uninhabited; and when Aram settled in those parts, the proprietor was too glad to get rid of his incumbrance of an empty house, at a nominal rent. The solitude of the place had been the main attraction to Aram: and as he possessed what would be considered a very extensive assortment of books, even for a library of these days, he required a larger apartment than he would have been

able to obtain in an abode more compact and more suitable to his tastes and mode of living.

The room in which the sisters now found themselves was the most spacious in the house, and was indeed of considerable dimensions. It contained in front one large window, put in from the wall. Opposite was an antique and high mantelpiece of black oak. The rest of the room was walled from the floor to the roof with books, volumes of all languages, and it must even be said, without much exaggeration, upon all sciences, were strewed around, on the chairs, the tables, or the floor. By the window stood the student's desk, and a large old-fashioned oak chair. A few papers, filled with astronomical calculations, lay on the desk, and these were all the witnesses of the *result* of study. Indeed Aram does not appear to have been a man much inclined to reproduce the learning he acquired; what he wrote was in very small proportion to what he had read.

So high and grave was the scholar's reputation, that the retreat and sanctum of so many learned hours would have been interesting, even to one who could not appreciate learning; but to Madeline, with her peculiar disposition and traits of mind, we may readily conceive that the room presented a powerful and pleasing charm. As the elder sister looked round in silence, Ellinor attempted to draw the old woman into conversation. She would fain have elicited some particulars of the habits and daily life of the recluse; but the deafness of their attendant was so obstinate and hopeless, that she was forced to give up the attempt in despair. "I fear," said she at last, her good nature so far overcome by impatience as not to forbid a slight yawn; "I fear we shall have a dull time of it till my father arrives. Just consider, the fat black mares never too fast, can only

creep along that broken path, for And there is none—it will be quite dark before the coach arrives.”

“I am sorry, dear Ellinor, my awkwardness should occasion you so stupid an evening,” answered Madeline.

“Oh,” cried Ellinor, throwing her arms around her sister’s neck, “it is not for myself I spoke; and, indeed, I am delighted to think we have got into this wizard’s den, and seen the instruments of his art. But I do so trust Mr. Aram will not meet that terrible man.”

“Nay,” said the prouder Madeline, “he is armed, and it is but one man. I feel too high a respect for him to allow myself much fear.”

“But those bookmen are not often harm,” remarked Ellinor, laughing.

“For shame,” said Madeline, the colour mounting to her forehead. “Do you not remember how, last summer, Eugene Aram rescued Dame Goodfellow’s child from the wolf, though at the literal peril of his own life? And who but Eugene Aram, when the floods in the poor ladies’ camp along the low lands by Partridge, went day after day to rescue the persons, or even to save the goods of those poor people, at a time when the luckiest villagers would not hazard themselves across the waters? But bless me, Ellinor, what is the matter? you turn pale—do you tremble?”

“Hush!” said Ellinor under her breath, and, putting her finger to her mouth, she rose and stole lightly to the window; she had observed the figure of a man pass by, and now, as she gazed the window, she saw how lost by the porch, and recognised the hideous stranger. Presently the bell sounded, and the old woman, familiar with its shrill sound, rose from her kneeling position beside the cushion to attend to the summons. Ellinor sprang forward and dismissed her; the poor old woman stood at her in amazement, wholly unable to

comprehend her abrupt gestures and her rapid language. It was with considerable difficulty, and after repeated efforts, that she at length impressed the dulled sense of the crone with the nature of their alarm, and the expediency of refusing admittance to the stranger. Meanwhile, the bell had rung again,—again, and the third time, with a prolonged violence which testified the impatience of the applicant. As soon as the good dame had satisfied herself as to Ellinor’s meaning, she could no longer be accused of unreasonable tactfulness; she wrung her hands, and poured forth a volley of lamentations and fears, which effectually relieved Ellinor from the dread of her unheeding the admonition. Satisfied at having done thus much, Ellinor now herself hastened to the door, and secured the ingress with an additional bolt, and then, as the thought flashed upon her, returned to the old woman, and made her, with an easier effort than before, now that her senses were sharpened by fear, comprehend the necessity of securing the back entrance also; both hastened away to effect this precaution, and Madeline, who herself desired Ellinor to accompany the old woman, was left alone. She kept her eyes fixed on the window with a strange sentiment of dread at being thus left in so helpless a situation; and though a door of no ordinary dimensions and double locked intervened between herself and the intruder, she expected in breathless terror, every instant, to see the form of the ruffian burst into the apartment. As she thus sat and looked, she shockingly saw the man, tired perhaps of repeating a summons so inefficient, come to the window and look peeringly within their room; Madeline had not the power to shriek. Would he break through the window? that was her only idea, and it deprived her of words, almost of

sense. He gazed upon her evident terror for a moment with a grim smile of contempt: he then knocked at the window, and his voice broke harshly on a silence yet more dreadful than the interruption.

"Ho, ho! so there is some life stirring! I beg pardon, madam, is Mr. Aram—Eugene Aram, within?"

"No," said Madeline, faintly; and then, sensible that her voice did not reach him, she reiterated the answer in a louder tone. The man, as if satisfied, made a rude inclination of

his head, and withdrew from the window. Ellinor now returned, and with difficulty Madeline found words to explain to her what had passed. It will be conceived that the two young ladies waited for the arrival of their father with no lukewarm expectation; the stranger, however, appeared no more; and in about an hour, to their inexpressible joy, they heard the rumbling sound of the old coach as it rolled towards the house. This time there was no delay in unbarring the door.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOLILOQUY, AND THE CHARACTER, OF A RECLUSE.—THE INTERRUPTION.

"Or let my lamp at midnight hour
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
Or thrice great Hermes, and unsphere
The spirit of Ponto"—Milton: *H Penserose*.

As Aram assisted the beautiful Madeline into the carriage—as he listened to her sweet voice—as he marked the grateful expression of her soft eyes—as he felt the slight yet warm pressure of her fairy hand, that vague sensation of delight which precludes love, for the first time in his sterile and solitary life, agitated his breast. Lester held out his hand to him with a frank cordiality which the scholar could not resist.

"Do not let us be strangers, Mr. Aram," said he, warmly. "It is not often that I press for companionship out of my own circle; but in your company I should find pleasure as well as instruction. Let us break the ice boldly, and at once. Come and dine with me to-morrow, and Ellinor shall join to us in the evening."

The excuse died upon Aram's lips. Another glance at Madeline conquered the remains of his reserve:

he accepted the invitation, and he could not but mark, with an unfamiliar emotion of the heart, that the eyes of Madeline sparkled as he did so.

With an abstracted air, and arms folded across his breast, he gazed after the carriage till the winding of the valley snatched it from his view. He then, waking from his reverie with a start, turned into the house, and carefully closing and barring the door, mounted with slow steps to the lofty chamber with which, the better to indulge his astronomical researches, he had crested his lonely abode.

It was now night. The heavens broadened round him in all the loving yet august tranquillity of the season and the hour; the stars bathed the living atmosphere with a solemn light; and above—about—around—

"The holy time was quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration."

He looked forth upon the deep and

ineffable stillness of the night, and indulged the reflections that it suggested.

"Ye mystic lights," said he, soliloquising: "worlds upon worlds—infinitesimal—measurable. Bright deliers of rest and change, rolling far over above our petty sea of mortality, as, wave after wave, we fret forth our little lives, and sink into the black abyss—can we look upon you, note your appointed order, and your unvarying courses, and not feel that we are, indeed, the poorest puppets of small perishing and restless destiny? Shall we see throughout creation each mortal fulfilling its pre-ordained fate—no wandering from its orbit—no variation in its seasons—and yet imagine that the Arch-architect will add back the times He has sent from their unseen source at our insubstantial bidding? Shall we think that our prayers can avert a doom woven with the skin of genius? To change a particle of our fate, might change the destiny of millions! Shall the link break the chain, and yet the chain be unbroken? Away, then, with our vague reveries, and our bound demands. All must wait, we said to those just before the worst who broke that one step behind. The waters of our existence were doomed before our birth—our sorrows and our joys; all laid of ages back, when this brown earth was purpled by what kind, you see the atoms had formed one layer of the present and the eternal and all-wise Ruler of the universe. Looking on that, had I not laid the monument of our birth and the lines of our career. What, then, is there? Fate? What life?—Solitude?"

Such were the strange and dark thoughts which, too familiar to his thoughts, now shrouded their mournful depths on his mind. He sought a better subject for meditation, and Medusa's Lasher met before him.

Eugene Aram was a man whose

whole life seemed to have been one sacrifice to knowledge. What is termed pleasure had no attraction for him. From the mature manhood at which he had arrived, he looked back along his youth, and recognised no youthful folly. Love he had hitherto regarded with a cold though not an incurious eye: intemperance had never lured him to a momentary self-abandonment. Even the innocent relaxations with which the austere minds relieve their accustomed toils, had had no power to draw him from his beloved researches. The delight *monstrum digito*; the gratification of triumphant wisdom; the whispers of an elevated vanity; existed not for his self-dependent and solitary heart. He was one of those earnest and high-wrought enthusiasts who now are almost extinct upon earth, and whom Romance has not hitherto attempted to portray; men not uncommon in the last century, who were devoted to knowledge, yet dedicated of its fumes, who lived for nothing else than to learn. From store to store, from treasure to treasure, they proceeded in exalting labour, and having accumulated all, they bestowed naught; they were the arch-enemies of the wealth of others. Wrapped in obscurity, in some sheltered nook, remote from the great stir of men, they passed a life of ceaseless and glorious toil; the most part of what they ransacked would appal the industry of a modern student, yet the most superficial of modern students might almost never be troubled. They lived among studies, but they gave none forth. And yet, even in this very barrenness, there issued nothing high; it was a pure and great spirit, unceasing, living alone from the fear and strife of the passions that vexed him, devoting themselves to the knowledge which is our purification and our immortality on earth, and yet deaf and blind to the demands of

the vanity which generally accompanies research: *refusing* the ignorant homage of their kind, making their sublime motive their only meal, adorning Wisdom for her sole sake, and set apart in the populous universe, like those remoter stars which interchange no light with earth—gild not our darkness, and colour not our air.

From his youth to the present period, Aram had *dwelt* little in cities, though he had visited many, yet he could scarcely be called ignorant of mankind; there seems something intuitive in the science which teaches us the knowledge of our men. Some men emerge from their seclusion, and find, all at once, a power to dart into the minds and drag forth the motives of those they see; it is a sort of second sight, born with them, not acquired. And Aram, it may be, rendered yet more acute by his profound and habitual investigations of our metaphysical frame, never quitted his solitude to mix with others, without penetrating into the broad traits or prevalent infirmities their characters possessed. In this, indeed, he differed from the scholar tribe, and even in abstraction was mechanically vigilant and observant. Much in his nature, had early circumstances given it a different bias, would have fitted him for worldly superiority and command. A restless energy, an unbroken perseverance, a profound, and scheming, and subtle thought, a genius fertile in resources, a tongue clothed with eloquence—all, had his ambition so chosen, might have given him the same empire over the physical, that he had now attained over the intellectual world. It could not be said that Aram wanted benevolence, but it was dashed, and mixed with a certain scorn: the benevolence was the offspring of his nature; the scorn seemed the result of his pursuits. He would feed the birds from his window

he would tread aside to avoid the worm on his path; were one of his own tribe in danger, he would save him at the hazard of his life:—yet in his heart he despised men, and believed them beyond amelioration. Unlike the present race of schoolmen, who incline to the consoling hope of human perfectibility, he saw in the gloomy past but a dark prophecy of the future. As Napoleon wept over one wounded soldier in the field of battle, yet ordered, without emotion, thousands to a certain death; so Aram would have sacrificed himself for an individual, but would not have sacrificed a momentary gratification for his race. And this sentiment towards men, at once of high disdain and profound despondency, was perhaps the cause why he rioted in indolence upon his extraordinary mental wealth, and could not be persuaded either to *daunt* the world or to serve it. But by little and little his frame had broke forth from the limits with which he would have walled it: a man who had taught himself, under singular difficulties, nearly all the languages of the civilised earth; the profound mathematician, the elaborate antiquarian, the abstruse philologist, uniting with his graver lore the more florid accomplishments of science, from the scholastic trifling of heraldry to the gentle learning of herbs and flowers, could scarcely hope for utter obscurity in that day when all intellectual acquirement was held in high honour, and its possumors were drawn together into a sort of brotherhood by the fellowship of their pursuits. And though Aram gave little or nothing to the world himself, he was ever willing to communicate to others any benefit or honour derivable from his researches. On the altar of science he kindled no light, but the fragrant oil in the lamps of his more pious brethren was largely borrowed from his stores. From almost every college in Europe

came to his obscure abode letters of acknowledgment or inquiry; and few foreign solicitations of travelling visited this country without seeking an interview with Aram. He received them with all the modesty and the courtesy that characterized his demeanour, but it was noticeable that he never allowed these interruptions to be more than temporary. He preferred no hospitality, and shrunk back from all offers of friendship; the interview lasted its hour, and was seldom renewed. Patronage was not less distasteful to him than society. Some occasional visits and condolences of the great he had received with a stern haughtiness, rather than his habitual subdued urbanity. The precise amount of his fortune was not known; his wants were so few, that what would have been poverty to others might easily have been competence to him; and the only evidence he manifested of the command of money, was in his extended and various library.

He had been now about two years settled in his present retreat. Unusual as he was, every one in the neighbourhood loved him; even the poorest of a man so distant, as being as it was supposed to do from a painful modesty, had in it something winning; and he had been known to excite on great occasions, a charity and a courage in the service of others which removed from the sedition of his habits the semblance of misanthropy and of avarice. The peasant there kindly put into his respectful greeting, as in his homeward walk he contemplated the pale and thoughtful student, with the faded arms and downcast eyes which characterized the abstraction of his mind; and the village maiden, as she conversed by him, stole a glance at his handsome but melancholy countenance; and told her sweetheart, she was sure the poor scholar had been crossed in love!

And thus passed the student's life, perhaps its monotony and dullness required less compassion than they received: no man can judge of the happiness of another. As the moon plays upon the waves, and seems to our eyes to favour with a peculiar beam one long track amidst the waters, leaving the rest in comparative obscurity; yet all the while, she is no nearer in her lustre—for though the rays that meet our eyes seem to us as though they were not, yet *she*, with an equal and unfavouring levelness, mirrors herself on every wave:—even so, perhaps, happiness falls with the same brightness and power over the whole expanse of life, though to our limited eyes it seems only to rest on those billows from which the ray is reflected on our sight.

From his contemplations, of whatsoever nature, Aram was now aroused by a loud summons at the door;—the clock had gone eleven. Who, at that late hour, when the whole village was buried in sleep, could demand admittance? He recollected that Madeline had said the stranger who had so alarmed them had inquired for him; at that recollection his cheek suddenly blanched, but again, that stranger was surely only some poor traveller who had heard of his wonted charity, and had called to solicit relief; for he had not met the stranger on the road to Lester's house, and he had naturally set down the apprehensions of his fair visitants to mere female timidity. Who could this be? No humble wayfarer would at that hour crave assistance;—some disaster, perhaps, in the village. From his lofty chamber he looked forth and saw the stars watch quietly over the scattered cottages and the dark bellows that slept breathlessly around. All was still as death, but it seemed the stillness of immobility and security; again! the bell again! He thought he heard his name shouted without: he strode

once or twice immediately to and fro the chamber; and then his step grew firm and his native courage returned. His pistols were still guided round him; he looked to the priming, and muttered some incoherent words; he

then descended the stairs, and slowly unlocked the door. Without the porch, the moonlight full upon his harsh features and sturdy frame, stood the ill-omened traveller.

CHAPTER V.

A DINNER AT THE SQUIRE'S HALL.—A CONVERSATION BETWEEN TWO RETIRED MEN WITH DIFFERENT OBJECTS IN RETIREMENT. — DISTURBANCE FIRST INTRODUCED INTO A PEACEFUL FAMILY.

"Can he not be sociable?"—*Troilus and Cressida.*

"Subit quippe etiam ipsius inertie dulcescit; et invisa primò desidia postremò amatur."—*TACITUS.*

"How use doth breed a habit in a man!

This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,

I better brook than flourishing peopled towns."—*Winter's Tale.*

THE next day, faithful to his appointment, Aram arrived at Lester's. The good squire received him with a warm cordiality, and Madeline with a blush and a smile that ought to have been more grateful to him than acknowledgements. She was still a prisoner to the sofa, but in compliment to Aram, the sofa was wheeled into the hall where they dined, so that she was not absent from the repast. It was a pleasant room, that old hall! Though it was summer—more for cheerfulness than warmth, the log burnt on the spacious hearth: but at the same time the latticed windows were thrown open, and the fresh yet sunny air stole in, rich from the embrace of the woodbine and clematis, which clung around the casement.

A few old pictures were panelled in the open wainscot; and here and there the horns of the mighty stag adorned

the walls, and united with the cheeriness of comfort associations of that of enterprise. The good old board was crowded with the luxuries meet for a country squire. The speckled trout, fresh from the stream, and the four-year-old mutton modestly disclaiming its own excellent merits, by affecting the shape and assuming the adjuncts of venison. Then for the confectiory,—it was worthy of Ellinor, to whom that department generally fell; and we should scarcely be surprised to find, though we venture not to affirm, that its delicate fabrication owed more to her than superintendence. Then the ale, and the cider with rosemary in the bowl, were incomparable potations; and to the gooseberry wine, which would have filled Mrs. Primrose with envy, was added the more generous warmth of port which, in the squire's younger days, had been the talk of the country, and which had now lost none of its attributes, save "the original brightness" of its colour.

But (the wine excepted) these va-

* *Possessed as the very soul of adversity, the strong endurance, the firmness, and the dash, which were at first hateful, became at length beloved.*

those dances, not with slight honour from their admiring guest; and, for though habitually reserved he was rarely gross, they remembered that he seemed unusually full and sincere in his mood. Something appeared to rest upon his mind, from which, by the excitement of wine and occasional bursts of eloquence more animated than ordinary, he seemed striving to escape; and at length, he apparently succeeded. Naturally enough, the conversation turned upon the curiosities and scenery of the country round; and here Aram shone with a peculiar grace. Vividly alive to the influences of nature, and minutely acquainted with its varieties, he invented every hill and glade to which remark recurred with the poetry of his descriptions; and from his research he gave even scenes the most familiar a charm and interest which had been strange to them till then. To this stream some romantic legend had once attached itself, long forgotten and now revived;—that moor, so barren to an ordinary eye, was yet productive of some rare and curious herb, whose properties afforded scope for lively description;—that old mound was yet rich in attraction to one versed in antiquities, and able to explain its origin, and from such explanation deduce a thousand classic or Celtic legends.

No subject was so homely or so trite, but the knowledge that had neglected nothing was able to render it luminous and new. And as he spoke, the scholar's countenance brightened, and his voice, at first hesitating and low, commanded the attention to its earnest and winning tone. Lester himself, a man who, in his long retirement, had not forgotten the active toils of intellectual society, nor even neglected a certain cultivation of intellectual pursuits, enjoyed a pleasure that he had not experienced for years. The gay

Elliot was fascinated into admiration; and Malbone, the most silent of the group, drank in every word, unconscious of the sweet poison she inhaled. Walter alone seemed not carried away by the eloquence of their guest. He preserved an unassuming and sullen demeanour, and every now and then regarded Aram with looks of suspicion and dislike. This was more remarkable when the men were left alone, and Lester, in surprise and anger, darted significant and admonitory glances towards his nephew, which at length seemed to rouse him into a more hospitable bearing. As the cool of the evening now came on, Lester proposed to Aram to enjoy it without, previous to returning to the parlour, to which the ladies had retired. Walter excused himself from joining them. The host and the guest accordingly strolled forth alone.

"Your solitude," said Lester, smiling, "is far deeper and less broken than mine: do you never find it irksome?"

"Can Humanity be at all times contented?" said Aram. "No stream, however secret or subterranean, glides on in eternal tranquility."

"You allow, then, that you feel some occasional desire for a more active and animated life?"

"Nay," answered Aram; "that is scarcely a fair corollary from my remark. I may, at times, feel the weariness of existence—the *indolent mite*; but I know well that the cause is not to be remedied by a change from tranquillity to agitation. The objects of the great world are to be pursued only by the excitement of the passions. The passions are, at once our masters and our destroyers;—they urge us onward, yet permit no rest to our progress. The further we proceed, the more dim and shadowy grows the goal. It is impossible for a man who leads the life of the world, the life of the passions, ever to expe-

rience content. For the life of the passions is that of a perpetual desire; but a state of content is the absence of all desire. Thus philosophy has become another name for mental quietude; and all wisdom points to a life of intellectual indifference, as the happiest which earth can bestow."

"This may be true enough," said Lester, reluctantly; "but —"

"But what?"

"A something at our hearts—a secret voice—an involuntary impulse—rebels against it, and points to action—action, as the true sphere of man."

A slight smile curved the lip of the student; he avoided, however, the argument, and remarked, —

"Yet, if you think so, the world lies before you: why not return to it?"

"Because constant habit is stronger than occasional impulse; and my seclusion, after all, has its sphere of action—has its object."

"All seclusion has."

"All? Scarcely so; for me, I have my object of interest in my children."

"And mine is in my books."

"And engaged in your object, does not the whisper of Fame ever animate you with the desire to go forth into the world, and receive the homage that would await you?"

"Listen to me," replied Aram. "When I was a boy, I went once to a theatre. The tragedy of Hamlet was performed; a play full of the noblest thoughts, the sublimest morality. The audience listened with attention, with admiration, with applause. I said to myself, when the curtain fell, 'It must be a glorious thing to obtain this empire over men's intellects and emotions.' But now an Italian mountebank appeared on the stage, — a man of extraordinary personal strength and sleight of hand. He performed a variety of juggling

tricks, and distorted his body into a thousand surprising and unnatural postures. The audience were transported beyond themselves; if they had felt delight in Hamlet, they glowed with rapture at the mountebank; they had listened with attention to the lofty thought, but they were snatched from themselves by the marvel of the strange posture. 'Enough,' said I; 'I correct my former notion. Where is the glory of ruling men's minds, and commanding their admiration, when a greater enthusiasm is excited by more bodily agility than was kindled by the most wonderful emanations of a genius little less than divine.' I have never forgotten the impression of that evening."

Lester attempted to combat the truth of the illustration, and ~~was~~ conversing, they passed on through the village green, when the gaunt form of Corporal Bunting arrested their progress.

"Beg pardon, squire," said he, with a military salute; "beg pardon, your honour," bowing to Aram; "but I wanted to speak to you, squire, 'bout the rent of the bit cot yonder: times very hard—pay some—and —"

"You desire a little delay, Bunting, eh?—Well, well, we'll see about it; look up at the hall to-morrow. Mr. Walter, I know, wants to consult you about letting the water from the great pond, and you must give us your opinion of the new brewing."

"Thank your honour, thank you, much obliged, I'm sure. I hope your honour liked the treat I sent up. Beg pardon, Master Aram, mayhap you would condescend to accept a few fish, now and then; they're very fine in these streams, as you probably know; if you please to let me, I'll send some up by the old woman to-morrow, that is, if the day's cloudy a-bit."

The scholar thanked the good Bunting, and would have proceeded

onward, but the corporal was in a frowning mood.

"But pardon, beg pardon, but strange-looking dog here last evening—asked after you—said you were old friend of his—travelling off in your direction—hope all was right, master!—*ugh!*"

"All right!" repeated Aram, fixing his eyes on the corporal, who had concluded his speech with a significant wink, and passing a full moment before he continued; then, as if satisfied with his survey, he added,—

"Ay, ay, I know whom you mean—he has become acquainted with me some years ago. So you saw him? What said he to you—of me?"

"Aught? Little enough, Master Aram: he seemed to think only of satisfying his own appetite; said he'd been a soldier."

"A soldier!—true?"

"Never told me the regiment, though—why?—did he ever desert, pray, your honour?"

"I don't know," answered Aram, turning away. "I know little, very little, about him!" He was going away, but stopped to add—"The man called on me last night for assistance, the lateness of the hour a little alarmed me. I gave him what I could afford, and he has now proceeded on his journey."

"Oh, then, he won't take up his quarters hereabouts, your honour?" said the corporal, hesitatingly.

"No, no; good evening."

"What! this amiable stranger, who so frequently my poor girls, is really known to you?" said Lester, in surprise. "pray is he as formidable as he seemed to them?"

"Surely," said Aram, with great composure; "he has been a wild roving fellow all his life, but that there is little real harm in him. He is certainly dangerous enough to—" here, interrupting himself and launching into a new sentence, Aram added

"but at all events he will frighten your nieces no more—he has proceeded on his journey northward. And now, yonder lies my way home. Good evening." The abruptness of this farewell did indeed take Lester by surprise.

"Why, you will not leave me yet."

The young ladies expect your return to them for an hour or so! What will they think of such desertion? No, no, come back, my good friend, and suffer me by and by to walk some part of the way home with you."

"Pardon me," said Aram, "I must leave you now. As to the ladies," he added, with a faint smile, half in melancholy, half in scorn, "I am not one whom they could miss;—forgive me if I seem unceremonious. Adieu."

Lester at first felt a little offended, but when he recalled the peculiar habits of the scholar, he saw that the only way to hope for a continuance of that society which had so pleased him, was to indulge Aram at first in his unsocial inclinations, rather than annoy him by a troublesome hospitality; he therefore, without further discourse, shook hands with him, and they parted.

When Lester regained the little parlour, he found his nephew sitting, silent and discontented, by the window. Madeline had taken up a book, and Ellina, in an opposite corner, was plying her needle with an air of earnestness and quiet, very unlike her usual playful and cheerful vivacity. There was evidently a cloud over the group; the good Lester regarded them with a searching yet kindly eye.

"And what has happened?" said he. "something of mighty import, I am sure, or I should have heard my pretty Ellina's merry laugh long before I crossed the threshold."

Ellina coloured and sighed, and worked faster than ever. Walter threw open the window, and whistled a favourite air quite out of tune.

Lester smiled, and seated himself by his nephew.

"Well, Walter," said he, "I feel, for the first time these ten years, that I have a right to scold you. What on earth could make you so inhospitable to your uncle's guest? You eyed the poor student, as if you wished him among the books of Alexandria!"

"I would he were burnt with them!" answered Walter, sharply. "He seems to have added the black art to his other accomplishments, and bewitched my fair cousins here into a forgetfulness of all but himself."

"Not me!" said Ellinor eagerly, and looking up.

"No, not you, that's true enough; you are too just, too kind;—it is a pity that Madeline is not more like you."

"My dear Walter," said Madeline, "what is the matter? You accuse me of what? being attentive to a man whom it is impossible to hear without attention!"

"There!" cried Walter, passionately; "you confess it. And so for a stranger,—a cold, vain, pedantic egotist, you can shut your ears and heart to those who have known and loved you all your life; and—and —"

"Vain!" interrupted Madeline, unheeding the latter part of Walter's address.

"Pedantic!" repeated her father.

"Yes! I say vain, pedantic!" cried Walter, working himself into a passion. "What on earth but the love of display could make him monopolize the whole conversation!—What

but pedantry could make him bring out those anecdotes, and allusions, and descriptions, or whatever you call them, respecting every old wall or stupid plant in the country!"

"I never thought you guilty of meanness before," said Lester gravely.

"Meanness!"

"Yes! for is it not mean to be jealous of superior acquirements, instead of admiring them?"

"What has been the use of those acquirements? Has he benefited mankind by them? Show me the poet—the historian—the orator, and I will yield to none of you; no, not to Madeline herself, in homage of their genius: but the mere creature of books—the dry and sterile collector of other men's learning—no—no. What should I admire in such a machine of literature, except a waste of perseverance?—And Madeline calls him handsome, too!"

At this sudden turn from declamation to reproach, Lester laughed outright; and his nephew, in high anger, rose and left the room.

"Who could have thought Walter so foolish?" said Madeline.

"Nay," observed Ellinor gently, "it is the folly of a kind heart, after all. He feels sore at our seeming to prefer another—I mean another's conversation—to his!"

Lester turned round in his chair, and regarded with a serious look the faces of both sisters.

"My dear Ellinor," said he, when he had finished his survey, "you are a kind girl—come and kiss me!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE STUDENT.—A SUMMER SCENE.—ARAM'S CONVERSATION WITH WALTER, AND SUBSEQUENT COLLOQUY WITH HIMSELF.

"The soft season, the firmament serene,
The loom Eusebiaster, and loch amene
The silver scail fishes on the grotto
O'er the walt clear streams sprinkling the heat."

GAWIN DOUGLAS.

— "Illa subter

Cæcum vulnus habes; sed late balneus auro

Prætegit"—*PRÆTER.*

SEVERAL days elapsed before the family of the manor-house encountered Aram again. The old woman came once or twice to present the inquiries of her master as to Miss Lester's accident; but Aram himself did not appear. This want of interest certainly attended Madame although she still drew upon Leonard Walter's displeasure, by displaying and resenting the unfavourable strictures on the scholar, in which that young gentleman delighted to indulge. By degrees, however, as the days passed without exhibiting the acquaintance which Walter had disappointed, the youth relaxed in his attacks, and seemed to yield to the remonstrances of his uncle. Lester had, indeed, conceived an especial inclination towards the refugee. Any man of reflection, who had lived for some time alone, and who suddenly meets with one who calls forth in him, and without labour or contradiction, the thoughts which have sprung up in his solitude, scarcely felt in their growth, will comprehend the new zeal, the awakening, as it were, of the mind, which Lester found in the conversation of Eugene Aram. His soli-

tary walk (for his nephew had the separate pursuits of youth) appeared to him more dull than before; and he longed to renew an intercourse which had given to the monotony of his life both variety and relief. He called twice upon Aram, but the student was or affected to be from home, and an invitation that Lester sent him, though couched in friendly terms, was, but with great semblance of kindness, refused.

"See Walter," said Lester, disconcerted as he finished reading the petition—"see what your rudeness has effected. I am quite convinced that Aram (evidently a man of susceptible as well as retentive mind) observed the coldness of your manner towards him, and that thus you have deprived me of the only society which, in this wilderness of heath and savages, gave me any gratification."

Walter replied apologetically, but his uncle turned away with a greater appearance of anger than his placid features were wont to exhibit, and Walter, cursing the innocent cause of his uncle's displeasure towards him, took up his fishing rod and went out alone, in no happy or exultant mood.

It was evening towards Oct.—an hour especially lively in the month of June, and not without reason favoured

* You have a beautiful deep bottom in your heart—but the broad bill of grief conceals it.

by the angler. Walter sauntered across the rich and fragrant fields, and came soon into a sheltered valley, through which the brooklet wound its shadowy way. Along the margin, the grass sprung up long and matted, and profuse with a thousand weeds and flowers—the children of the teeming June. Here the ivy-leaved bell flower, and not far from it the common enchanter's night-shade, the silver weed, and the water-aven; and by the hedges that now and then neared the water, the guelder-rose, and the white briony, over-running the thicket with its emerald leaves and luxuriant flowers. And here and there, silvering the bushes, the elder offered its snowy tribute to the summer. All the insect youth were abroad, with their bright wings and glancing motion; and from the lower depths of the bushes the blackbird darted across, or higher and unseen the first cuckoo of the eve began its continuous and mellow note. All this cheeriness and gloss of life, which enanour us with the few bright days of the English summer, make the poetry in an angler's life, and convert every idler at heart into a moralist, and not a gloomy one, for the time.

Softened by the quiet beauty and voluptuousness around him, Walter's thoughts assumed a more gentle dye, and he broke out into the old lines—

"Sweet day, so soft, so calm, so bright;
The bridal of the earth and sky,"

as he dipped his line into the current, and drew it across the shadowy hollows beneath the bank. The river-gods were not, however, in a favourable mood, and after waiting in vain for some time, in a spot in which he was usually successful, he proceeded slowly along the margin of the brooklet, crushing the reeds at every step, into that fresh and delicious odour, which furnished Bacon with one of his most beautiful comparisons.

He thought, as he proceeded, that

beneath a tree that overhung the waters in the narrowest part of their channel, he heard a voice, and as he approached he recognised it as Aram's. A curve in the stream brought him close by the spot, and he saw the student half-reclined beneath the tree, and muttering, but at broken intervals, to himself.

The words were so scattered, that Walter did not trace their clue; but involuntarily he stopped short, within a few feet of the soliloquist: and Aram, suddenly turning round, beheld him. A fierce and abrupt change broke over the scholar's countenance; his cheek grew now pale, now flushed; and his brows knit over his flashing and dark eyes with an intent anger, that was the more withering from its contrast to the usual calmness of his features. Walter drew back, but Aram, stalking directly up to him, gazed into his face, as if he would read his very soul.

"What I eavesdropping!" said he, with a ghastly smile. "You overheard me, did you? Well, well, what said I?—what said I?" Then pausing, and noting that Walter did not reply, he stamped his foot violently, and grinding his teeth, repeated in a smothered tone.—"Boy! what said I?"

"Mr. Aram," said Walter, "you forget yourself. I am not one to play the listener, more especially to the learned ravings of a man who can conceal nothing I care to know. Accident brought me hither."

"What! surely—surely I spoke aloud, did I not?—did I not?"

"You did, but so incoherently and indistinctly, that I did not profit by your indiscretion. I cannot plagiarise, I assure you, from any scholastic designs you might have been giving vent to."

Aram looked on him for a moment, and then breathing heavily, turned away.

"Pardon me," he said; "I am v

poor, half-rasped man; much study has unruined me. I should never live but with my own thoughts—forgive me, sir, I pray you."

Touched by the sudden contrition of Aram's manner, Walter forgot, not only his present displeasure, but his general dislike. He stretched forth his hand to the student, and hastened to assure him of his ready forgiveness. Aram signed deeply as he pressed the young man's hand, and Walter saw, with surprise and emotion, that his eyes were filled with tears.

"Ah!" said Aram, gently shaking his head. "it is a hard life we book-men lead! Not for us is the bright face of noon-day or the smile of woman, the gay unbending of the heart, the neighing steed, and the shrill trumpet; the pride, pomp, and circumstance of life. Our enjoyments are few and calm; our labour constant, but that is not the evil, sir!—the body avenges its own neglect. We grow old before our time; we writher up; the sap of youth shrinks from our veins; there is no bound in our step. We look about us with dimmed eyes, and our breath grows short and thick, and pains, and coughs, and shooting aches, come upon us at night. It is a better life—a better life—a joyless life. I would I had never commenced it. And yet the harsh word *enough* upon us; our necessities broken, and they wonder why we are quarrelsome; our limbs enfeebled, and they ask why we are not gay; our brain grows dizzy and indistinct (as with me just now), and shrugging their shoulders, they whisper their neighbours that we are mad. I wish I had worked at the plough, and known sleep, and loved death—and—and not been what I am."

As the student uttered the last sentence, he bowed his head, and a few tears stole silently down his cheek. Walter was greatly affected—it took him by surprise; nothing in Aram's

ordinary demeanour betrayed any facility to emotion; and he conveyed to all the idea of a man, if not proud, at least cold.

"You do not suffer bodily pain, I trust!" asked Walter, soothingly.

"Pain does not conquer me," said Aram, slowly recovering himself. "I am not melted by that which I would fain despise. Young man, I wronged you—you have forgiven me. Well, well, we will say no more on that head; it is past and pardoned. Your uncle has been kind to me, and I have not returned his advances; you shall tell him why. I have lived thirteen years by myself, and I have contracted strange ways and many humours not common to the world—you have seen an example of this. Judge for yourself if I be fit for the smoothness, and confidence, and ease of social intercourse; I am not fit, I feel it! I am doomed to be alone; tell your uncle this—tell him to suffer me to live so! I am grateful for his goodness—I know his motives—but I have a certain pride of mind; I cannot bear suffering—I loathe indulgence. Nay, interrupt me not, I beseech you. Look round on Nature—behold the only company that humbles me not—except the dead whose souls speak to us from the immortality of books. Those herbs at your feet, I know their secrets—I watch the mechanism of their life; the winds—they have taught me their language; the stars—I have unravelled their mysteries, and these, the creatures and ministers of God—these I offend not by my mood—to them I utter my thoughts, and break forth into my dreams, without reserve and without fear. But men disturb me—I have nothing to learn from them—I have no wish to yoke in them; they cripple the wild liberty which has become to me a second nature. What its shell is to the tortoise, solitude has become to me—my protection; nay, my life!"

"But," said Walter, "with us, at least, you would not have to dread restraint; you might come when you would, be silent or converse, according to your will."

Aram smiled faintly, but made no immediate reply.

"So, you have been angling!" he said, after a short pause, and as if willing to change the thread of conversation. "Fie! it is a treacherous pursuit; it encourages man's worst propensities—cruelty and deceit."

"I should have thought a lover of Nature would have been more indulgent to a pastime which introduces us to her most quiet retreats."

"And cannot Nature alone tempt you without need of such allurements? What! that crisped and winding stream, with flowers on its very tide—the water violet and the water lily—these silent brakes—the cool of the gathering evening—the still and luxuriance of the universal life around you; are not these enough of themselves to tempt you forth? If not, go to!—your excuse is hypocrisy."

"I am used to these scenes," replied Walter; "I am weary of the thoughts they produce in me, and long for any diversion or excitement."

"Ay, ay, young man! The mind is restless at your age: have a care. Perhaps you long to visit the world—to quit these obscure haunts which you are fatigued in admiring?"

"It may be so," said Walter, with a slight sigh. "I should at least like to visit our great capital, and note the contrast; I should come back, I imagine, with a greater zest to these scenes."

Aram laughed. "My friend," said he, "when men have once plunged into the great sea of human toil and passion, they soon wash away all love and zest for innocent enjoyments. What once was a soft retirement, will become the most intolerable monotony; the galling of social existence

—the feverish and desperate chances of honour and wealth, upon which the men of cities set their hearts, render all pursuits less exciting, utterly insipid and dull. The brook and the angle—ha! ha!—these are not occupations for men who have once battled with the world."

"I can forego them, then, without regret," said Walter, with the sanguineness of his years. Aram looked upon him wistfully; the bright eye, the healthy cheek, and vigorous frame of the youth, suited with his desire to seek the conflict of his kind, and gave a natural grace to his ambition which was not without interest, even to the recluse.

"Poor boy!" said he, mournfully, "how gallantly the ship leaves the port; how worn and battered it will return!"

When they parted, Walter returned slowly homewards, filled with pity for the singular man whom he had seen so strangely overpowered; and wondering how suddenly his mind had lost its former rancour to the student. Yet there mingled even with these kindly feelings a little displeasure at the superior tone which Aram had unconsciously adopted towards him; and to which, from any one, the high spirit of the young man was not readily willing to submit.

Meanwhile, the student continued his path along the water side, and as, with his gliding step and musing air, he roamed onward, it was impossible to imagine a form more suited to the deep tranquillity of the scene. Even the wild birds seemed to feel, by a sort of instinct, that in him there was no cause for fear; and did not stir from the turf that neighboured, or the spray that overhung, his path.

"So," said he, soliloquising, but not without casting frequent and jealous glances round him, and in a murmur so indistinct as would have been

Inaudible even to a listener—"so, I was not overheard—well, I must care myself of this habit, our thoughts, like words, ought not to go abroad without a veil. Ay, this tone will not betray me; I will preserve its tenour, for I cannot surely altogether renounce my sole confidence—stay, and thought seems more clear when uttered even thus. 'Tis a fine youth, full of the impulse and daring of his years; I was never so young at heart. I was—nay, what matters it? Who is answerable for his nature? Who can say,—'I contrived all the circumstances which made me what I am?' Made true,—howe'er! did I bring on myself this temptation? Have I not fenced it from me throughout all my youth, when my brain did at moments forsook me, and the veins did bound? And now, when the yellow tustons on the green of life, now, for the first time, this emotion—this weakness,—and for whom? One I have lived with—known—beneath whose eyes I have passed through all the five gradations, from liking to love, from love to passion? No;—one, whom I have seen but little, who, it is true, arrested my eye at the first glance it caught of her two years since, but to whom, till within the last few weeks, I have scarcely spoken! Her voice rings in my ear, her look dwells on my heart, when I sleep she is with me, when I wake I am haunted by

her image. Strange, strange! Is love, then, after all the sudden passion which in every age poetry has termed it, though till now my reason has disbelieved the notion? . . . And now, what is the question? To resist, or to yield. Her father invites me, courts me; and I stand aloof. Will this strength, this forbearance, last?—Shall I *encourage* my mind to this decision?" Here Aram paused abruptly, and then renewed: "It is true! I ought to weave my lot with none. Memory sets me apart and alone in the world; it seems unnatural to me—a thought of dread—to bring another being to my solitude, to set an everlasting watch on my uprisings and my downittings; to invite eyes to my face when I sleep at nights, and ears to every word that may start unbidden from my lips. But if the watch be the watch of love—away! does love endure for ever? He who trusts to woman, trusts to the type of change. Affection may turn to hatred, fondness to loathing, anxiety to dread and, at the best, woman is weak—she is the menton to her impulses. Enough; I will steel my soul,—shut up the avenues of sense,—brand with the scathing-iron these yet green and soft emotions of lingering youth,—and freeze, and chain, and curdle up feeling, and heart, and manhood, into ice and age!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE POWER OF LOVE OVER THE RESOLUTION OF THE STUDENT.—ARAM BECOMES
A FREQUENT GUEST AT THE MANOR HOUSE. — A WALK. — CONVERSATION
WITH DAME DARKMAN.—HER HISTORY.—POVERTY AND ITS EFFECTS.

"*Maid*. Then, as Time won time frequent to our hearth,
Didst thou not breathe, like dreams, into my soul,
Nature's more gentle secrets, the sweet lore
Of the green herb and the bee-worshipped flower?
And when deep Night did o'er the mother Earth
Diffuse meek quiet, and the Heart of Heaven
With love grew breathless—didst thou not unroll
The volume of the wondrous Chaldean stars,
And of the winds, the clouds, the invisible air,
Make eloquent discourse, until, methought,
No human lip, but some diviner spirit
Alone, could preach such truths of things divine?
And so—and so—

Aram. From Heaven we turn'd to Earth
And Wisdom fathered Passion.

• • • • •
Aram. Wise men have praised the Peasant's thoughtless lot,
And learned Pride hath envied humble Toil;
If they were right, why let us burn our books,
And sit us down, and play the fool with Time,
Mocking the prophet Wisdom's high doctrines,
And wasting this trite Present with dark clouds
Till Night becomes our Nature; and the ray
E'en of the stars, but meteors that withdraw
The wandering spirit from the sluggish rest
Which makes its proper bliss. I will accept
This denizen of toil."—*From Eugene Aram, a MS. Tragedy.*

"A wicked hag, and envy's self excelling
In mischief, for herself she only vex,
But this same, both herself and others eke perplex.

• • • • •
Who then can strive with strong necessity,
That holds the world in his still changing state? &c. &c.
Then do no further go, no further stray,
But here lie down, and to thy rest betake."—*SPANSEA.*

A few men, perhaps, could boast of so masculine and firm a mind as, despite his eccentricities, Aram assuredly possessed. His habits of solitude had strengthened its natural hardness; for, accustomed to make all the sources of happiness flow solely from himself, his thoughts the only companions—his genius the only

vivifier—of his retreat; the tone and faculty of his spirit could not but assume that austere and vigorous energy which the habit of self-dependence almost invariably produces; and yet the reader, if he be young, will scarcely feel surprised that the resolution of the student, to battle against incipient love, from whatever

reasons it might be formed, gradually and reluctantly melted away. It may be noted, that the enthusiasts of learning and revelry have, at one time or another in their lives, been, of all the tribes of men, the most keenly susceptible to love; their solitude feeds their passion, and deprived, as they usually are, of the more hurried and vehement occupations of life, when love is once admitted to their hearts, there is no countercheck to its emotions, and no escape from its excitement. Aram, too, had just arrived at that age when a man usually feels a sort of revolution in the current of his desires. At that age, those who have hitherto pursued love, begin to grow alive to ambition; those who have been slaves to the pleasures of life, awaken from the dream, and direct their desire to its interests. And in the same proportion, they who till then have wasted the prodigal fervours of youth upon a sterile soil—who have served Ambition, or, like Aram, devoted their hearts to Wisdom, relax from their ardour, look back on the departed years with regret, and continue, in their maturity, the fiery pleasures and delicious follies which are only pardonable in youth. In short, as in every human pursuit there is a certain vanity, and as every aspiration contains within itself the seed of disappointment, so there is a period of life when we pause from the present, and are discontented with the aspiration. We then look around us for something new—again follow—and are again deceived. Few men throughout life are the servants to one desire. When we gain the middle of the bridge of our mortality, different objects from those which attracted us upward almost invariably lure us down the descent. Happy they who exhaust in the former part of the journey all the follies of existence! But how different is the crude and exuberant love of that age when thought has

not given intensity and power to the passions, from the love which is felt, *for the first time*, in maturer but still youthful years! As the flame burns the brighter in proportion to the resistance which it conquers, this later love is the more glowing in proportion to the length of time in which it has overcome temptation; all the solid and concentrated faculties, ripened to their full height, are no longer capable of the infinite distractions, the numberless caprices of youth; the rays of the heart, not rendered weak by diversion, collect into one burning focus;* the same earnestness and unity of purpose which render what we undertake in manhood so far more successful than what we would effect in youth, are equally visible and equally triumphant, whether directed to interest or to love. But then, as in Aram, the feelings must be fresh as well as matured; they must not have been fritted away by previous indulgence; the love must be the first produce of the soil, not the languid after-growth.

The reader will remark, that the first time in which our narrative has brought Madeline and Aram together, was not the first time they had met: Aram had long noted with admiration a beauty which he had never seen paralleled, and certain vague and unsettled feelings had precluded the deep emotion that her image now excited within him. But the main cause of his present and growing attachment had been in the evident sentiment of kindness which he could not but feel Madeline bore towards him. So retiring a nature as his might never have harboured love, if the love bore the character of presumption; but that one so beautiful beyond his dreams as Madeline Lester

* Love is of the nature of a burning-glass, which, kept still in one place, breeds increased heat, to doth nothing!—*Letter to Sir John Rushing.*

should deign to cherish for him a tenderness, that might suffer him to hope, was a thought that, when he caught her eye unconsciously fixed upon him, and noted that her voice grew softer and more tremulous when she addressed him, forced itself upon his heart, and woke there a strange and irresistible emotion which solitude and the brooding reflection that solitude produces—a reflection so much more intense in proportion to the paucity of living images it dwells upon—soon ripened into love. Perhaps, even, he would not have resisted the impulse as he now did, had not, at this time, certain thoughts connected with past events been more forcibly than of late years obtruded upon him, and thus in some measure divided his heart. By degrees, however, those thoughts receded from their vividness, into the habitual deep, but not oblivious, shade, beneath which his commanding mind had formerly driven them to repose; and as they thus receded, Madeline's image grew more undisturbedly present, and his resolution to avoid its power more fluctuating and feeble. Fate seemed bent upon bringing together these two persons, already so attracted towards each other. After the conversation recorded in our last chapter, between Walter and the student, the former, touched and softened as we have seen in spite of himself, had cheerfully forborne (what before he had done reluctantly) the expressions of dislike which he had once lavished so profusely upon Aram; and Lester, who, forward as he had seemed, had nevertheless been hitherto a little checked in his advances to his neighbour by the hostility of his nephew, felt no scruple to deter him from urging them with a pertinacity that almost forbade refusal. It was Aram's constant habit, in all seasons, to wander abroad at certain times of the day, especially towards the evening;

and if Lester failed to win entrance to his house, he was thus enabled to meet the student in his frequent rambles, and with a seeming freedom from design. Actuated by his great benevolence of character, Lester earnestly desired to win his solitary and unfriended neighbour from a mood and habit which he naturally imagined must engender a growing melancholy of mind; and since Walter had detailed to him the particulars of his meeting with Aram, this desire had been considerably increased. There is not, perhaps, a stronger feeling in the world than pity, when united with admiration. When one man is resolved to know another, it is almost impossible to prevent it: we see daily the most remarkable instances of perseverance on one side conquering distaste on the other. By degrees, then, Aram relaxed from his insociability; he seemed to surrender himself to a kindness, the sincerity of which he was compelled to acknowledge; if he for a long time refused to accept the hospitality of his neighbour, he did not reject his society when they met, and this intercourse increased by little and little; and, ultimately, the recluse yielded to solicitation, and became the guest as well as companion. This, at first accidental, grew, though not without many interruptions, into habit; and, at length, few evenings were passed by the inmates of the manor-house without the society of the student.

As his reserve wore off, his conversation mingled with its attractions a tender and affectionate tone. He seemed grateful for the pains which had been taken to allure him to a scene in which, at last, he acknowledged he found a happiness that he had never experienced before: and those who had hitherto admired him for his genius, admired him now yet more for his susceptibility to the affections.

There was not in Aram anything

that savoured of the harshness of poetry, or the petty varieties of dogmatism: his voice was soft and low, and his manner always remarkable for its singular gentleness and a certain dignified humility. His language did, indeed, at times, assume a tone of calm and patriarchal command; but it was only the command arising from an intimate persuasion of the truth of what he uttered. Moralising upon our nature, or mourning over the delusions of the world, a grave and solemn strain breathed throughout his lofty words and the profound melancholy of his wisdom; but it touched, not offended—elevated, not humbled—the lesser intellect of his listeners; and even this air of unconscious superiority vanished when he was invited to teach or explain.

That task which so few do gracefully: that an accurate and shrewd thinker has said,—"It is always safe to learn, even from our enemies; seldom safe to instruct even our friends,"—Aram performed with a modesty and simplicity that charmed the vanity even while it corrected the ignorance, of the applicant; and so various and minute was the information of this accomplished man, that there scarcely existed any branch even of that knowledge usually called practical, to which he could not impart from his stores something valuable and new. The agriculturist was astonished at the success of his suggestions; and the mechanic was indebted to him for the device which abridged his labour in improving its result.

It happened that the study of botany was not, at that day, so common and common a diversion with young ladies as it is now; and Ellinor, captivated by the notion of a science that gave a life and a history to the loveliest of earth's offspring, he sought Aram to teach her its principles.

As Madeline, though she did not second the request, could scarcely absent herself from sharing the lesson, this pursuit brought the pair—already lovers—closer and closer together. It associated them not only at home, but in their rambles throughout that enchanting country; and there is a mysterious influence in Nature, which renders us, in her loveliest scenes, the most susceptible to love! Then, too, how often in their occupation their hands and eyes met—how often, by the shady wood or the soft water side, they found themselves alone. In all times, how dangerous the connexion, when of different sexes, between the scholar and the teacher! Under how many pretences, in that connexion, the heart finds the opportunity to speak out.

Yet it was not with ease and complacency that Aram delivered himself to the intoxication of his deepening attachment. Sometimes he was studiously cold, or evidently wrestling with the powerful passion that mastered his reason. It was not without many throes and desperate resistance, that love at length overwhelmed and subdued him; and these alternations of his mood, if they sometimes offended Madeline and sometimes wounded, still rather increased than lessened the spell which bound her to him. The doubt and the fear, the caprice and the change, which agitate the surface, swell also the tides, of passion. Woman, too, whose love is so much the creature of her imagination, always asks something of mystery and conjecture in the object of her affection. It is a luxury to her to perplex herself with a thousand apprehensions; and the more restlessly her lover occupies her mind, the more deeply he enthralls it.

Mingling with her pure and tender attachment to Aram a high and unwearied veneration, she saw in his diffidence, and occasional abstraction and contradiction of manner, a

confirmation of the modest sentiment that most weighed upon her heart; and imagined that, at those times, he thought her, as she deemed herself, unworthy of his love. And this was the only struggle which she conceived to pass between the affection he evidently bore her, and the feelings which had as yet restrained him from its open avowal.

One evening, Lester and the two sisters were walking with the student along the valley that led to the house of the latter, when they saw an old woman engaged in collecting firewood among the bushes, and a little girl holding out her apron to receive the sticks with which the crone's skinny arms unsparingly filled it. The child trembled, and seemed half crying; while the old woman, in a harsh, grating croak, was muttering forth mingled obdurgation and complaint.

There was something in the appearance of the latter at once impressive and displeasing; a dark, withered, furrowed skin was drawn like parchment over harsh and aquiline features; the eyes, through the rheum of age, glittered forth black and malignant; and even her stooping posture did not conceal a height greatly above the common stature, though gaunt and shrivelled with years and poverty. It was a form and face that might have recalled at once the celebrated description of Otway, on a part of which we have already unconsciously encroached, and the remaining part of which we shall wholly borrow:—

"On her crooked shoulders had she wrapp'd
The tatter'd remnants of an old strip
hanging,
That served to keep her carcass from the
cold,
So there was nothing of a piece about her
Her looser weeds were all o'er coarsely
patch'd
With different-coloured rags, black, red,
white, yellow,
And seem'd to speak variety of wretched-
ness."

"See," said Lester, "one of the eyesores of our village (I might say), the only discontented person."

"What! Dame Darkmans?" said Ellinor, quickly. "Ah! let us turn back. I hate to encounter that old woman; there is something so evil and savage in her manner of talk—and look, how she rates that poor girl, whom she has dragged or decoyed to assist her!"

Aram looked curiously on the old hag. "Poverty," said he, "makes some humble, but more malignant; is it not want that grafts the devil on this poor woman's nature? Come, let us assist her—I like conferring with distress."

"It is hard labour this!" said the student, gently.

The old woman looked up askant—the music of the voice that addressed her sounded harsh on her ear.

"Ay, ay!" she answered. "You fine gentlefolks can know what the poor suffer; ye talk and ye talk, but ye never assist."

"Say not so, dame," said Lester; "did I not send you but yesterday bread and money? And when did you ever look up at the hall without obtaining relief?"

"But the bread was as dry as a stick," growled the hag: "and the money, what was it? will it last a week? Oh, yes! Ye think as much of your doits and mites, as if ye stripped yourselves of a comfort to give it to us. Did ye have a dish less—a 'tate less, the day ye sent me—your charity I 'spose ye calls it? Och! fie! But the Bible's the poor cretur's comfort."

"I am glad to hear you say that, dame," said the good-natured Lester; "and I forgive everything else you have said, on account of that one sentence."

The old woman dropped the sticks she had just gathered, and glowered at the speaker's benevolent counte-

nance with a malicious meaning in her dark eyes.

"An' ye do! Well, I'm glad I please ye there. Ooh! yes! the Bible's a mighty comfort; for it says as much that the rich man shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven! There's a truth for you, that makes the poor folk's heart sharp like a cricket—ho! ho! I saw 'em the morners of a night, and I thinks and thinks as how I shall see you all burning; and ye'll ask me for a drop o' water, and I shall laugh thin from my pleasant seat with the angels. Ooh! it's a book for the poor that!"

The sisters shuddered. "And you think, then, that with envy, malice, and all uncharitableness at your heart, you are certain of Heaven? For shame! Pluck the mote from your own eye!"

"What signifies praching? Did not the Blessed Saviour come for the poor? Them as has rage and dry blood here will be trodded in the next world; an' if we poor folk have maled as ye calls it, whose fault's that? What do ye teach us? Eh?—Answer me that. Ye keeps all the learning an' all the other fine things to your self, and then ye scold, and threaten, and bang us, 'cause we are not as wise as you. Ooh! there's no justice in the lauch if Heaven is not made for us, and the everlasting Hell, with its wormstone and fire, and its gnawing an' gushing of teeth, an' its thorn, an' its torture, an' its worm that never dies, for the like o' you."

"Come! come away," said Ellnor, pulling her father's arm.

"And if," said Aram, pausing, "if I were to say to you—*come your want and it shall be fulfilled*, would you have charity for me also?"

"Umph!" returned the hag, "ye are the great scold, and they say ye knows what no one else do. Till me now," and she approached and passionately laid her long finger on the

student's arm: "till me,—have ye iver, among other fine things, known poverty!"

"I have, woman!" said Aram, sternly.

"Ooh, ye have thin! And did ye not sit, and gheen, and eat up your own heart, an' curse the sun that looked so gay, an' the winged things that played so blithe-like, an' scowl at the rich folk that never wasted a thought on ye! Till me now, your honour, till me!"

And the crone curtseyed with a mock air of beseeching humility.

"I never forgot, even in want, the love due to my fellow-sufferers; for, woman, we all suffer,—the rich and the poor: there are worse pangs than those of want!"

"Ye think there be, do ye? That's a comfort,—umph! Well, I'll till ye now, I feel a rispect for you, that I don't for the rest on 'em: for your face does not insult me with being cheery like theirs yon'er; an' I have noted ye walk in the dusk with your eyes down and your arms crossed; an' I have said,—that man I do not hate, somehow, for he has something dark at his heart like me!"

"The lot of earth is woe," answered Aram, calmly, yet shrinking back from the crone's touch: "judge we charitably, and act we kindly to each other. There—this money is not much, but it will light your hearth and heap your table without toil, for some days at least!"

"Thank your honour: an' what thank you I'll do with the money!"

"What?"

"Deluk, drink, drink!" cried the hag, fiercely. "There's nothing like drink for the poor, for then we fancy ourselves what we wish; and," sinking her voice into a whisper, "I thinks then that I have my foot on the billies of the rich folks, and my hands twined about their throats, and I hear them shriek, and—thin I'm happy."

"Go home!" said Aram, turning away, "and open the Book of Life with other thoughts."

The little party proceeded, and, looking back, Lester saw the old woman gaze after them, till a turn in the winding valley hid her from his sight.

"That is a strange person, Aram: scarcely a favourable specimen of the happy English peasant," said Lester, smiling.

"Yet they say," added Madeline, "that she was not always the same perverse and hateful creature she is now."

"Ay," said Aram; "and what, then, is her history?"

"Why," replied Madeline, slightly blushing to find herself made the narrator of a story, "some forty years ago this woman, so gaunt and hideous now, was the beauty of the village. She married an Irish soldier, whose regiment passed through Grassdale, and was heard of no more till about ten years back, when she returned to her native place, the discontented, envious, altered being you now see her."

"She is not reserved in regard to her past life," said Lester. "She is too happy to seize the attention of any one to whom she can pour forth her dark and angry confidence. She saw her husband, who was afterwards dismissed the service—a strong, powerful man, a giant of his tribe,—pine and waste, inch by inch, from mere physical want, and at last literally die from hunger. It happened that they had settled in the county in which her husband was born, and in that county, those frequent famines which are the scourge of Ireland were for two years especially severe. You may note that the old woman has a strong vein of coarse eloquence at her command, perhaps acquired in (for it partakes of the natural character of) the country in

which she lived so long; and it would literally thrill you with horror to hear her descriptions of the misery and destitution that she witnessed, and amidst which her husband breathed his last. Out of four children, not one survives. One, an infant, died within a week of the father; two sons were executed, one at the age of sixteen, one a year older, for robbery committed under aggravated circumstances; and a fourth, a daughter, died in the hospitals of London. The old woman became a wanderer and a vagrant, and was at length passed to her native parish, where she has since dwelt. These are the misfortunes which have turned her blood to gall; and these are the causes which fill her with so bitter a hatred against those whom wealth has preserved from sharing or witnessing a fate similar to hers."

"Oh!" said Aram, in a low, but deep tone, "when—when will these hideous disparities be banished from the world? How many noble natures—how many glorious hopes—how much of the seraph's intellect, have been crushed into the mire, or blasted into guilt, by the mere force of physical want! What are the temptations of the rich to those of the poor? Yet, see how lenient we are to the crimes of the one—how relentless to those of the other! It is a bad world; it makes a man's heart sick to look around him. The consciousness of how little individual genius can do to relieve the mass, grinds out, as with a stone, all that is generous in ambition, and to aspire from the level of life is but to be more graspingly selfish."

"Can legislators, or the moralists that instruct legislators, do so little, then, towards universal good?" said Lester, doubtfully.

"Why, what can they do but forward civilisation? And what is civilisation, but an increase of human disparities? The more the luxury of

the few, the more startling the wants, and the more galling the sense, of poverty. Even the dreams of the philanthropist only tend towards equality; and where is equality to be found, but in the state of the savage? No; I thought otherwise once; but I now regard the vast lazar house around us without hope of relief;—death is the sole physician!”

“Ah, no,” said the high-souled Madeline, eagerly; “do not take away from us the best feeling and the highest desire we can cherish. How poor, even in this beautiful world, with the warm sun and fresh air about us, would be life, if we could not make the happiness of others!”

Aram looked at the beautiful speaker with a soft and half-moist smile. There is one very peculiar pleasure that we feel as we grow older,—it is to see embodied, in another and a more lovely shape, the thoughts and sentiments we once nursed ourselves; it is as if we viewed before us the incarnation of our own youth; and it is no wonder that we are warmed towards the object that thus seems the living apparition of all that was brightest in ourselves! It was with this sentiment that Aram now gazed on Madeline. She felt the gaze, and her heart beat delightedly; but she sunk at once into a silence, which she did not break during the rest of their walk.

“I do not say,” said Aram, after a

pause, “that we are not able to make the happiness of those immediately around us. I speak only of what we can effect for the mass. And it is a deadening thought to mental ambition, that the circle of happiness we can create is formed more by our moral than our mental qualities. A warm heart, though accompanied but by a mediocre understanding, is even more likely to promote the happiness of those around, than are the absorbed and abstract, though kindly, powers of a more elevated genius: but (observing Lester about to interrupt him) let us turn from this topic,—let us turn from man’s weakness to the glories of the Mother-Nature, from which he sprung.”

And kindling, as he ever did, the moment he approached a subject so dear to his studies, Aram now spoke of the stars, which began to sparkle forth,—of the vast, illimitable career which recent science had opened to the imagination,—and of the old, bewildering, yet eloquent, theories, which from age to age had at once misled and elevated the conjecture of past ages. All this was a theme to which his listeners loved to listen, and Madeline not the least. Youth, beauty, pomp, what are these, in point of attraction, to a woman’s heart, when compared to eloquence! —The magic of the tongue is the most dangerous of all spells!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRIVILEGE OF GENIUS.—LESTER'S SATISFACTION AT THE ASPECT OF EVENTS.
—HIS CONVERSATION WITH WALTER.—A DISCOVERY.

"*Alc.* I am for Lidian :

This accident, no doubt, will draw him from his hermit's life ! "

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"*Lis.* Spare my grief, and apprehend

What I should speak."—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: *The Lover's Progress.*

IN the course of the various conversations our family of Grassdale enjoyed with their singular neighbour, it appeared that his knowledge had not been confined to the closet : at times, he dropped remarks which showed that he had been much among cities, and travelled with the design, or at least with the vigilance, of the observer ; but he did not love to be drawn into any detailed accounts of what he had seen, or whither he had been : an habitual, though a gentle, reserve, kept watch over the past—not, indeed, that character of reserve which excites the doubt, but which inspires the interest. His most gloomy moods were rather abrupt and fitful than morose, and his usual bearing was calm, soft, and even tender.

There is a certain charm about great superiority of intellect that winds into deep affections, which a much more constant and even amiability of manners in lesser men often fails to reach. Genius makes many enemies, but it makes sure friends—friends who forgive much, who endure long, who exact little : they partake of the character of disciples as well as friends. There lingers about the human heart a strong inclination to

look upward—to revere : in this inclination lies the source of religion, of loyalty, and also of the worship and immortality which are rendered so cheerfully to the great of old. And, in truth, it is a divine pleasure ! admiration seems in some measure to appropriate to ourselves the qualities it honours in others. We would,—we root ourselves to the natures we so love to contemplate, and their life grows a part of our own. Thus when a great man, who has engrossed our thoughts, our conjectures, our homage, dies, a gap seems suddenly left in the world ; a wheel in the mechanism of our own being appears abruptly stilled ; a portion of ourselves, and not our worst portion,—for how many pure, high, generous sentiments it contains,—dies with him ! Yes ! it is this love, so rare, so exalted, and so denied to all ordinary men, which is the especial privilege of greatness, whether that greatness be shown in wisdom, in enterprise, in virtue, or even, till the world learns better, in the more daring and lofty order of crime. A Socrates may claim it to-day—a Napoleon to-morrow ; nay, a brigand chief, illustrious in the circle in which he lives, may call it forth no less powerfully than the generous failings of a Byron,

or the sublime excellence of the greater Milton.

Lester saw with evident complacency the passion growing up between his friend and his daughter; he looked upon it as a tie that would permanently reconcile Aram to the hearth of peace and domestic life, a tie that would constitute the happiness of his daughter, and secure to himself a content in the man he felt most inclined, of all he knew, to honour and esteem. He remarked in the gentleness and calm temper of Aram much that was calculated to ensure domestic peace; and, knowing the peculiar disposition of Madeline, he felt that she was exactly the person, not only to bear with the peculiarities of the student, but to venerate their source. In short, the more he contemplated the idea of this alliance, the more he was charmed with its probability.

Musing on this subject, the good squire was one day walking in his garden, when he perceived his nephew at some distance, and remarked that Walter, on seeing him, instead of coming forward to meet him, was about to turn down an alley in an opposite direction.

A little pained at this, and remembering that Walter had of late seemed estranged from himself, and greatly altered from the high and cheerful spirits natural to his temper, Lester called to his nephew; and Walter, reluctantly and slowly changing his purpose of avoidance, advanced and met him.

"Woe Walter!" said the uncle, taking his arm, "this is somewhat unkind to shun me, are you engaged in any pursuit that requires secrecy or haste?"

"No, indeed, sir!" said Walter, with some embarrassment; "but I thought you seemed wrapped in reflection, and would naturally dislike being disturbed."

"Hem! As to that, I have no reflex-

tions I wish concealed from you, Walter, or which might not be benefited by your advice." The youth pressed his uncle's hand, but made no reply; and Lester, after a pause, continued:—

"I am delighted to think, Walter, that you seem entirely to have overcome the unfavourable prepossession which at first you testified towards our excellent neighbour. And, for my part, I think he appears to be especially attracted towards yourself; he seeks your company; and to me he always speaks of you in terms which, coming from such a quarter, give me the most lively gratification."

Walter bowed his head, but not in the delighted vanity with which a young man generally receives the assurance of another's praise.

"I own," renewed Lester, "that I consider our friendship with Aram one of the most fortunate occurrences in my life; at least," added he, with a sigh, "of late years. I doubt not but you must have observed the partiality with which our dear Madeline evidently regards him; and yet more, the attachment to her, which breaks forth from Aram, in spite of his habitual reserve and self-control. You have surely noted this, Walter?"

"I have," said Walter, in a low tone, and turning away his head.

"And doubtless you share my satisfaction. It happens fortunately now, that Madeline early contracted that studious and thoughtful turn, which, I must own, at one time gave me some uneasiness and vexation. It has taught her to appreciate the value of a mind like Aram's. Formerly, my dear boy, I hoped that at one time or another she and yourself might form a dearer connexion than that of cousins. But I was disappointed, and I am now consoled. And indeed I think there is that in Ellen which might be yet more calculated to render you happy; that

is, if the bias of your mind should ever lean that way."

"You are very good," said Walter, bitterly. "I own I am not flattered by your selection: nor do I see why the plainer and less brilliant of the two sisters must necessarily be the fitter for me."

"Nay," replied Lester, piqued, and justly angry: "I do not think, even if Madeline have the advantage of her sister, that you can find any fault with the personal or mental attractions of Elminster. But, indeed, this is not a matter in which relations should interfere. I am far from any wish to prevent you from choosing throughout the world any one whom you may prefer. All I hope is, that your future wife will be like Elminster in kindness of heart and sweetness of temper."

"From choosing throughout the world?" repeated Walter: "and how in this nook am I to see the world?"

"Walter, your voice is reproachful!—Do I deserve it?"

Walter was silent.

"I have of late observed," continued Lester, "and with wounded feelings, that you do not give me the same confidence, or meet me with the same affection, that you once delighted me by manifesting towards me. I know of no cause for this change. Do not let us, my son, for I may so call you—do not let us, as we grow older, grow also more apart. Time divides with a sufficient demarcation the young from the old; why deepen the necessary line? You know well, that I have never from your childhood insisted heavily on a guardian's authority. I have always loved to contribute to your enjoyments, and shown you how devoted I am to your interests, by the very frankness with which I have consulted you on my own. If there be now on your mind any secret grievance, or any secret wish, speak it, Walter,—you are alone with the friend on earth who loves you best!"

Walter was wholly overcome by this address: he pressed his good uncle's hand to his lips, and it was some moments before he mustered self-composure sufficient to reply.

"You have ever, ever been to me all that the kindest parent, the tenderest friend, could have been:—believe me, I am not ungrateful. If of late I have been altered, the cause is not in you. Let me speak freely: you encourage me to do so. I am young, my temper is restless: I have a love of enterprise and adventure: is it not natural that I should long to see the world? This is the cause of my late abstraction of mind. I have now told you all: it is for you to decide."

Lester looked wistfully on his nephew's countenance before he replied—

"It is as I gathered," said he, "from various remarks which you have lately let fall. I cannot blame your wish to leave us; it is certainly natural: nor can I oppose it. Go, Walter, when you will."

The young man turned round with a lighted eye and flushed cheek.

"And why, Walter," said Lester, interrupting his thanks, "why this surprise? why this long doubt of my affection? Could you believe I should refuse a wish that, at your age, I should have expressed myself? You have wronged me; you might have saved a world of pain to us both by acquainting me with your desire when it was first formed: but, enough. I see Madeline and Aram approach,—let us join them now, and to-morrow we will arrange the time and method of your departure."

"Forgive me, sir," said Walter, stopping abruptly as the glow faded from his cheek, "I have not yet recovered myself; I am not fit for other society than yours. Excuse my joining my cousin, and ——"

"Walter!" said Lester, also stop-

ping about, and looking full on his nephew; "a painful thought flashes upon me! Would to Heaven I may be wrong!—Have you ever felt for Madame more tenderly than for her sister?"

Walter literally trembled as he stood. The tears rushed into Lester's eyes—he grasped his nephew's hand warmly,—

"God comfort thee, my poor boy!" said he, with great emotion; "I never dreamed of this."

Walter felt now that he was understood. He gratefully returned the pressure of his uncle's hand, and then, withdrawing his own, darted down one of the intersecting walks, and was almost instantly out of sight.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STATE OF WALTER'S MIND.—AN ANGLER AND A MAN OF THE WORLD.— A COMPANION FOUND FOR WALTER.

"This great disease for love I dre,"

There is no tongue can tell the wo;

I love the love that loves not me,

I may not mend, but mourning me."

The Mourning Maiden.

"I in these flowery meads would be,

These crystal streams should solace me,

To whose hartsongous bubbling voice

I with my angle would rejoice."—ISAAC WALTON.

When Walter left his uncle, he hurried, scarcely conscious of his steps, towards his favourite haunt by the water-side. From a child, he had singled out that scene as the witness of his early sorrows or boyish schemes; and still, the solitude of the place nourished the habits of his boyhood.

Long had he, unknown to himself, nourished an attachment to his beautiful cousin; nor did he awaken to the secret of his heart, until, with an agonising jealousy, he penetrated the secret at her own. The reader has, doubtless, already perceived that it was this jealousy which at the first awakened Walter's dislike to Aram; the consolation of that dislike was faded then now. The gentleness and forbearance of the student's deportment had taken away all ground of

offence; and Walter had sufficient generosity to acknowledge his merits, while tortured by their effect. Silently, till this day, he had gnawed his heart, and found for its despair no confidant and no comfort. The only wish that he cherished was a feverish and gloomy desire to leave the scene which witnessed the triumph of his rival. Every thing around had become hateful to his eyes, and a curse had lighted upon the face of home. He thought now, with a bitter satisfaction, that his escape was at hand; in a few days he might be rid of the gall and the pang, which every moment of his stay at Grassdale inflicted upon him. The sweet voice of Madeline he should hear no more, subduing its silver sound for his rival's ear—no more he should watch apart, and himself unheeded, how thinly her glance roved in search of another,

or how vividly her cheek flushed when the step of that happier one approached. Many miles would at least shut out this picture from his view; and in absence, was it not possible that he might teach himself to forget? Thus meditating, he arrived at the banks of the little brooklet, and was awakened from his reverie by the sound of his own name. He started, and saw the old corporal seated on the stump of a tree, and busily employed in fixing to his line the mimic likeness of what anglers, and, for aught we know, the rest of the world, call the "violet-fly."

"Ha! master,—at my day's work, you see;—fit for nothing else now. When a musket's half worn out, schoolboys buy it—pop it at sparrows. I be like the musket! but never mind—have not seen the world for nothing. We get reconciled to all things: that's my way—ough! Now, sir, you shall watch me catch the finest trout you have seen this summer: know where he lies—under the bush yonder. Whi—sh! sir, whi—sh!"

The corporal now gave his warrior soul up to the due guidance of the violet-fly: now he whipped it lightly on the wave; now he slid it coquetishly along the surface; now it floated, like an unconscious beauty, carelessly with the tide; and now, like an artful prude, it affected to loiter by the way, or to steal into designing obscurity under the shade of some overhanging bank. But none of these manœuvres captivated the wary old trout, on whose acquisition the corporal had set his heart; and, what was especially provoking, the angler could see distinctly the dark outline of the intended victim, as it lay at the bottom,—like some well-regulated bachelor, who eyes from afar the charms he has discreetly resolved to neglect.

The corporal waited till he could no longer blind himself to the dis-

pleasing fact that the violet-fly was wholly inefficacious; he then drew up his line, and replaced the contemned beauty of the violet-fly with the novel attractions of the yellow-dun.

"Now, sir," whispered he, lifting up his finger, and nodding significantly to Walter. Softly dropped the yellow-dun on the water, and swiftly did it glide before the gaze of the latent trout: and now the trout seemed aroused from his apathy, behold he moved forward, balancing himself upon his fins; now he slowly ascended towards the surface: you might see all the speckles of his coat:—the corporal's heart stood still—he is now at a convenient distance from the yellow-dun; lo, he surveys it steadfastly; he ponders, he sees-saws himself to and fro. The yellow-dun sails away in affected indifference; that indifference whets the appetite of the hesitating gazer; he darts forward; he is opposite the yellow-dun,—he pushes his nose against it with an eager rudeness,—he—no, he does not bite, he recoils, he gazes again with surprise and suspicion on the little charmer; he fades back slowly into the deeper water, and then, suddenly turning his tail towards the disappointed bait, he makes off as fast as he can,—yonder,—yonder, and disappears! No, that's he leaping yonder from the wave: Jupiter! what a noble fellow! What leaps he at!—A real fly! "D—n his eyes!" growled the corporal.

"You might have caught him with a minnow," said Walter, speaking for the first time.

"Minnow!" repeated the corporal, gruffly; "ask your honour's pardon. Minnow!—I have fished with the yellow-dun these twenty years, and never knew it fail before. Minnow!—baugh! But ask pardon; your honour is very welcome to fish with a minnow, if you please it."

"Thank you, Bunting. And pray what sport have you had to-day?"

"Oh,—good, good," quoth the corporal, snatching up his basket and closing the cover, lest the young squire should pry into it. No man is more tenacious of his secrets than your true angler. "Sent the best home two hours ago; one weighed three pounds on the fish of a man; indeed, I'm satisfied now; time to give up," and the corporal began to do up his rod.

"Ah, sir!" said he, with a half sigh, "a pretty river this, don't mean to say it is not, but the river Lea for my money. You know the Lea?—not a morning's walk from Lannun, Mary Gibson, my first sweetheart, lived by the bridge,—caught such a trout there by the by!—had beautiful eyes—black, round as a cherry—five feet eight without shoes—might have fished in the forty-second."

"Who, Bunting?" said Walter, smiling, "the lady or the trout?"

"Augh!—haugh!—what! Oh, laughing at me, your honour, you're welcome, sir. Leave's a sorry thing—know the world now—have not fallen so low these ten years. I doubt—no offence, sir, no offence—I doubt whether your honour and Miss Ellnor can say as much."

"I and Miss Ellnor?—you forget yourself strangely, Bunting," said Walter, colouring with anger.

"Beg pardon, sir, beg pardon—rough soldier—lived away from the world so long, words slipped out of my mouth—about without leave."

"But why," said Walter, smothering or conquering his vexation,—"why couple me with Miss Ellnor? Did you imagine that we—we were in love with each other?"

"Indeed, sir, and if I did, 'tis no more than my neighbours imagine too."

"Humph! Your neighbours are very silly, then, and very wrong."

No. 64.

"Beg pardon, sir, again—always getting askew. Indeed some did say it was Miss Madeline, but I says,—says I,—'No! I'm a man of the world—see through a millstone; Miss Madeline's too easy like; Miss Nelly blushes when he speaks; scarlet is Love's regimentals—it was ours in the forty-second, edged with yellow—pepper-and-salt pantaloons! For my part I think,—but I've no business to think, howsoever—haugh!"

"Pray what do you think, Mr. Bunting? Why do you hesitate?"

"'Fraid of offence—but I do think that Master Aram—your honour understands—howsoever squire's daughter too great a match for such as he!"

Walter did not answer; and the garrulous old soldier, who had been the young man's playmate and companion since Walter was a boy, and was therefore accustomed to the familiarity with which he now spoke, continued, mingling with his abrupt prolixity an occasional shrewdness of observation, which showed that he was no inattentive commentator on the little and quiet world around him,—

"Free to confess, Squire Walter, that I don't quite like this larned man, as much as the rest of em—something queer about him—can't see to the bottom of him—don't think he's quite so meek and lamblike as he seems—once saw a calm dead pool in foren parts—peered down into it—by little and little, my eye got used to it—saw something dark at the bottom—stared and stared—by Jupiter—a great big alligator!—walked off immediately—never liked quiet pools since—ugh, no!"

"An argument against quiet pools, perhaps, Bunting, but scarcely against quiet people."

"Don't know as to that, your honour—much of a muchness, I have seen Master Aram, demure as he

looks, start, and bite his lip, and change colour, and frown—he has an ugly frown, I can tell ye,—when he thought no one nigh. A man who gets in a passion with himself may be soon out of temper with others. Free to confess, I should not like to see him married to that stately, beautiful, young lady—but they do gossip about it in the village. If it is not true, better put the squire on his guard—false rumours often beget truths—beg pardon, your honour—no business of mine—baugh! But I'm a lone man, who have seen the world, and I think on the things around me, and I turns over the quid—now on this side, now on the other—'tis my way, sir—and—but I offend your honour."

"Not at all; I know you are an honest man, Bunting, and well affected to our family: at the same time, it is neither prudent nor charitable to speak harshly of our neighbours without sufficient cause. And really you seem to me to be a little hasty in your judgment of a man so inoffensive in his habits, and so justly and generally esteemed, as Mr. Aram."

"May be, sir—may be,—very right what you say. But I thinks what I thinks all the same; and, indeed, it is a thing that puzzles me, how that strange looking vagabond, as frightened the ladies so, and who, Miss Nelly told me—for she saw them in his pocket—carried pistols about him, as if he had been among cannibals and Hottentots, instead of the peaceablest county that man ever set foot in, should boast of his friendship with this larned schollard, and pass I dare swear a whole night in his house! Birds of a feather flock together—augh!—sir!"

"A man cannot surely be answerable for the respectability of all his acquaintances, even though he feel obliged to offer them the accommodation of a night's shelter!"

"Baugh!" grunted the corporal.

"Seen the world, sir—seen the world—young gentlemen are always so good-natured; 'tis a pity, that the more one sees the more suspicious one grows. One does not have gump-tion till one has been properly cheated—one must be made a fool very often in order not to be fooled at last!"

"Well, corporal, I shall now have opportunities enough of profiting by experience. I am going to leave Grassdale in a few days, and learn suspicion and wisdom in the great world."

"Augh! baugh!—what!" cried the corporal, starting from the contemplative air which he had hitherto assumed, "The great world?—how?—when?—going away?—who goes with your honour?"

"My honour's self; I have no companion, unless you like to attend me," said Walter, jestingly; but the corporal affected, with his natural shrewdness, to take the proposition in earnest.

"I! your honour's too good; and indeed, though I say it, sir, you might do worse: not but what I should be sorry to leave nice snug home here, and this stream, though the trout have been shy lately,—ah! that was a mistake of yours, sir, recommending the minnow; and neighbour Dealtry, though his ale's not so good as 'twas last year; and—and—but, in short, I always loved your honour—dandled you on my knees;—you recollect the broadsword exercise?—one, two, three—augh! baugh! and if your honour really is going, why, rather than you should want a proper person, who knows the world, to brush your coat, polish your shoes, give you good advice—on the faith of a man, I'll go with you myself!"

This alacrity on the part of the corporal was far from displeasing to Walter. The proposal he had at first made unthinkingly, he now seriously thought advisable; and at length it

was settled that the corporal should call the next morning at the mayor's house, and receive instructions to conclude arrangements for the journey. Not forgetting, as the

sagacious Bunting delicately insinuated, "the wee settlements as to wages, and board wages, more a matter of form, like, than anything else—sugh!"

CHAPTER X.

THE LOVERS.—THE ENCOUNTER AND QUARREL OF THE RIVALS.

"Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came."—*Comus.*

"*Pietro.* Now do me noble right.

Rod. I'll satisfy you.

But not by the sword."—*BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: The Pilgrim.*

WHILE Walter and the corporal enjoyed the above conversation, Madeline and Aram, whom Lester left to themselves, were pursuing their walk along the military fields. Their love had passed from the eye to the lip, and now found expression in words.

"Observe," said he, as the light touch of one, who he felt loved him earnestly, rested on his arm, "Observe, as the later summer now begins to breathe a more various and mellow glory into the landscape, how singularly pure and kind the atmosphere becomes. When, two months ago, in the full flush of June, I walked through these fields, a grey mist hid you distant hills, and the far forest from my view. Now, with what a transparent calmness the whole expanse of scenery spreads itself before me. And now, Madeline, is the change that has come over myself since that time. Then if I looked beyond the limited present, all was dim and indistinct. Now the mist has faded away—the broad future extends before me, calm and bright with the hope which is bestowed from your love."

We will not tax the passion of the radiant eye soldier, whose wild keen moment into the more dialogue of love, with the blushing Madeline,

reply, or with all the soft vows and tender confessions which the rich poetry of Aram's mind made yet more delicious to the ear of his dreaming and devoted mistress.

"There is one circumstance," said Aram, "which casts a momentary shade on the happiness I enjoy—my Madeline probably guesses its nature. I regret to see that the blessing of your love must be purchased by the misery of another, and that other, the nephew of my kind friend. You have doubtless observed the melancholy of Walter Lester, and have long since known its origin."

"Indeed, Eugene," answered Madeline, "it has given me great pain to note what you refer to; for it would be a false delicacy in me to deny that I have observed it. But Walter is young and high-spirited; nor do I think he is of a nature to love long where there is no return!"

"And what," said Aram, sorrowfully,—"what deduction from reason can ever apply to love! Love is a very contradiction of all the elements of our ordinary nature: it makes the proud man meek,—the cheerful, sad,—the high-spirited, tame; our strongest resolutions, our hardest energy, fail before it. Believe me, you cannot

prophecy of its future effect in a man from any knowledge of his past character. I grieve to think that the blow falls upon one in early youth, ere the world's disappointments have blunted the heart, or the world's numerous interests have multiplied its resources. Men's minds have been turned when they have not well sifted the cause themselves, and their fortunes marred, by one stroke on the affections of their youth. So at least have I read, Madeline, and so marked in others. For myself, I knew nothing of love in its reality till I knew you. But who can know you, and not sympathise with him who has lost you?"

"Ah, Eugene! you at least overrate the influence which love produces on men. A little resentment and a little absence will soon cure my cousin of an ill-placed and ill requited attachment. You do not think how easy it is to forget."

"Forget!" said Aram, stopping abruptly; "ay, forget—it is a strange truth! we *do* forget! The summer passes over the furrow, and the corn springs up; the sod forgets the flower of the past year; the battle field forgets the blood that has been spilt upon its turf; the sky forgets the storm; and the water the noon day sun that slept upon its bosom. All Nature preaches forgetfulness. Its very order is the progress of oblivion. And I—I—give me your hand, Madeline,—I, ha! ha! I forget too!"

As Aram spoke thus wildly, his countenance worked; but his voice was slow, and scarcely audible; he seemed rather conferring with himself, than addressing Madeline. But when his words ceased, and he felt the soft hand of his betrothed, and, turning, saw her anxious and wistful eyes fixed in alarm, yet in all unsuspecting confidence, on his face; his features relaxed into their usual serenity, and kissing the hand he clasped, he

continued, in a collected and steady tone, —

"Forgive me, my sweetest Madeline. These fitful and strange moods sometimes come upon me yet. I have been so long in the habit of pursuing any train of thought, however wild, that presents itself to my mind, that I cannot easily break it, even in your presence. All studious men—the twilight hermits of books and closets, contract this ungraceful custom of soliloquy. You know our abstraction is a common jest and proverb: you must laugh me out of it. But stay, dearest!—there is a rare herb at your feet, let me gather it. So, do you note its leaves—this bending and silver flower! Let us rest on this bank, and I will tell you of its qualities. Beautiful as it is, it has a poison."

The place in which the lovers rested is one which the villagers to this day call "The Lady's Seat;" for Madeline, whose history is fondly preserved in that district, was afterwards wont constantly to repair to that bank (during a short absence of her lover, hereafter to be noted), and subsequent events stamped with interest every spot she was known to have favoured with resort. And when the flower had been duly conned, and the study dismissed, Aram, to whom all the signs of the seasons were familiar, pointed to her the thousand symptoms of the month which are unheeded by less observant eyes; not forgetting, as they thus reclined, their hands clasped together, to couple each remark with some allusion to his love, or some deduction which heightened compliment into poetry. He bade her mark the light gossamer as it floated on the air; now soaring high—high into the translucent atmosphere; now suddenly stooping, and sailing away beneath the tangles, which ever and anon it hung with a silken web, that by the next morn would glitter

with a thousand dewdrops. "And so," said he, fancifully, "does leave behind its numberless creations, marking the air its path and empire; ascending aloof at its wild will, hanging its meshes on every bough, and bending the common grass break into a fairy lustre at the beam of the daily sun!"

He pointed to her the spot, where, in the silent brake, the harebells, now waxing rare and few, yet lingered—or where the mystic ring on the soft turf captured up the associations of Oberon and his train. That superstition gave license and play to his full memory and glowing fancy, and Shakspeare—Spenser—Armando—the magic of each mighty master of Fairy Realm—he soaked, and poured into her transported ear. It was precisely such arts, which to a gay and more worldly nature than Madeline's might have seemed but wearisome, that arrested and won her imaginative and high-wrought mind. And thus he, who to another might have proved but the retired and moody student, became to her the very being of whom her "mystic meditation" had dreamed—the master and magician of her fate.

Aram did not return to the house with Madeline; he accompanied her to the garden gate, and then, taking care of her, bent his way homeward. He had gained the entrance of the park, when he saw Walter cross his path at a short distance. His heart, naturally susceptible to kindly emotion, smote him, as he remarked the moody listlessness of the young man's step, and reached the beautiful lightness it was wont habitually to wear. He smiled, and joined Walter before the latter was aware of his presence.

"Good evening," said he, merrily, "if you are going my way, give me the benefit of your company."

"My path lies yonder," replied Walter, somewhat sullenly; "I regret that it is different from yours."

"In that case," said Aram, "I can delay my return home, and will, with your leave, intrude my society upon you for some few minutes."

Walter bowed his head in reluctant assent. They walked on for some moments without speaking, the one unwilling, the other seeking an occasion, to break the silence.

"This, to my mind," said Aram, at length, "is the most pleasing landscape in the whole country, observe the bashful water stealing away among the woodlands. Methinks the wave is endowed with an instinctive wisdom, that it thus shuns the world."

"Rather," said Walter, "with the love for change which exists everywhere in nature, it does not seek the shade until it has passed by 'towered cities,' and 'the busy hum of men.'"

"I admire the shrewdness of your reply," rejoined Aram; "but note how far more pure and lovely are its waters in these retreats, than when washing the walls of the reeking town, receiving into its breast the taint of a thousand pollutions, vexed by the sound, and stench, and unwholesome perturbation of men's dwelling places. Now it glazes only what is high or beautiful in nature—the stars or the leafy banks. The wind that ruffles it is clothed with perfumes; the rivulet that swells it descends from the ever-lasting mountains, or is formed by the rains of Heaven. Believe me, it is the type of a life that glides into solitude from the weariness and fretful turmoil of the world."

"No flattery, hate, or envy lodgeth there."

"There no suspicion swayed in private deed,
Yet fearful of the actor himself, doth wear."

"Bride is not there; no tyrant there we feel!"

"I will not cope with you in simile,

or in poetry," said Walter, as his lip curved, "it is enough for me to think that life should be spent in action. I hasten to prove if my judgment be erroneous."

"Are you, then, about to leave us?" inquired Aram.

"Yes, within a few days."

"Indeed! I regret to hear it."

The answer sounded jarringly on the irritated nerves of the disappointed rival.

"You do me more honour than I desire," said he, "in interesting yourself, however lightly, in my schemes or fortune."

"Young man," replied Aram, coldly, "I never see the impetuous and yearning spirit of youth without a certain, and, it may be, a painful interest. How feeble is the chance that its hopes will be fulfilled! Enough if it see not all its loftier aspirations, as well as its brighter expectations."

Nothing more aroused the proud and fiery temper of Walter Lester than the tone of superior wisdom and superior age which his rival sometimes assumed towards him. More and more displeased with his present companion, he answered, in no conciliatory tone, "I cannot but consider the warning and the fears of one, neither my relation nor my friend, in the light of a gratuitous affront."

Aram smiled as he answered,—

"There is no occasion for resentment. Preserve this hot spirit and this high self-confidence, till you return again to these scenes, and I shall be at once satisfied and corrected."

"Sir," said Walter, colouring and irritated more by the smile than the words of his rival, "I am not aware by what right or on what ground you assume towards me the superiority, not only of admonition but reproof! My uncle's preference towards you gives you no authority over me. That preference I do not pretend to share."—He paused for a moment, thinking

Aram might hasten to reply; but as the student walked on with his usual calmness of demeanour, he added, stung by the indifference which he attributed, not altogether without truth, to disdain,—**"And since you have taken upon yourself to caution me, and to forebode my inability to resist the contamination, as you would term it, of the world, I tell you, that it may be happy for you to bear so clear a conscience, so untouched a spirit, as that which I now boast, and with which I trust in God and my own soul I shall return to my birth-place. It is not the holy only that love solitude; and men may shun the world from another motive than that of philosophy."**

It was now Aram's turn to feel resentment, and this was indeed an insinuation not only unwarrantable in itself, but one which a man of so peaceable and guileless a life, affecting even an extreme and rigid austerity of morals, might well be tempted to repel with scorn and indignation; and Aram, however meek and forbearing in general, testified in this instance that his wanted gentleness arose from no lack of man's natural spirit. He laid his hand commandingly on young Lester's shoulder, and surveyed his countenance with a dark and menacing frown.

"Boy!" said he, "were there meaning in your words, I should (mark me!) avenge the insult;—as it is, I despise it. Go!"

So high and lofty was Aram's manner—so majestic was the sternness of his rebuke, and the dignity of his bearing, as, waving his hand, he now turned away, that Walter lost his self-possession and stood fixed to the spot, abashed, and humbled from his late anger. It was not till Aram had moved with a slow step several paces backward toward his home, that the bold and haughty temper of the young man returned to his aid. Ashamed, and

himself for the momentary weakness he had betrayed, and heaving to himself a haughty sneer after the steady form of his rival, and, planting himself full in his path, said, in a voice half-choked with mounting emotions, —

"Had you have given me the opportunity I have long desired; you yourself have now broken that peace which existed between us, and which to me was more better than womanhood. You have dared — yes, dared to use threatening language towards me! I call on you to fulfil your threat. I tell you that I meant, I desired, I thirsted to affront you. Now mount my purpose, promptly, boldly, as you will and can!"

There was something remarkable in the contrasted figures of the rivals, as they now stood fronting each other. The elastic and vigorous form of Walter Lester, his sparkling eyes, his confident and glowing cheek, his clenched hands, and his whole frame, alive and eloquent with the energy, the heat, the hasty courage and fiery spirit of youth: on the other hand, the bending frame of the student, gradually rising into the dignity of its tall height — his pale cheek, in which the warm hues neither deepened nor warmed, his large eyes raised to meet Walter's bright, steady, and yet low-cast. Nothing weak, nothing misshapen could be traced in that form or that lofty countenance; yet all excitement had vanished from his aspect. He seemed at once tranquil and prepared.

"You designed to affront me!" said he; "it is well — it is a noble confession — and whereabouts? What do you propose to gain by it? — A man whose whole life is peace, you would provoke to outrage? Would there be triumph in that, or disgrace? — A man, whom your uncle humbles and loves, you would insult without cause — you would waylay — you would, after watching and creating your opportunity, outstep into defending himself.

Is this worthy of that high spirit of which you boasted? Is this worthy a generous anger, or a noble hatred? Away! you malign yourself. I shrink from no quarrel — why should I? I have nothing to fear! my nerves are firm — my heart is faithful to my will; my habits may have diminished my strength, but it is yet equal to that of most men. As to the weapons of the world — they fall not to my use. I might be excused by the most pitiless, for rejecting what becomes neither my station nor my habits of life; but I learned thus much from books long since, 'Hold thyself prepared for all things.' — I am so prepared. And as I command the spirit, I lack not the skill, to defend myself, or return the hostility of another." As Aram thus said, he drew a pistol from his bosom, and pointed it hastily towards a tree at the distance of some paces.

"Look," said he; "you note that small discoloured and white stain in the bark — you can but just observe it; — he who can send a bullet through that spot need not fear to meet the quarrel which he seeks to avoid."

Walter turned mechanically, and indignant, though silent, towards the tree. Aram fired, and the ball penetrated the centre of the stain. He then replaced the pistol in his bosom, and said —

"Early in life I had many enemies, and I taught myself these arts. From habit I still hear about me the weapons I trust and pray I may never have occasion to use. But to return. — I have offended you — I have incurred your hatred — why? What are my sins?"

"Do you ask the cause?" said Walter, speaking between his ground teeth. "Have you not trespassed my vision, blighted my hopes — charmed away from me the affections which were more to me than the world, and driven me to wander from my home

with a crushed spirit and a cheerless heart? Are these no causes for hate?"

"Have I done this?" said Aram, recoiling, and evidently and powerfully affected. "Have I so injured you?—It is true! I know it—I perceive it—I read your heart; and—bear witness Heaven!—I feel for the wound that I, but with no guilty hand, inflict upon you. Yet be just:—ask yourself, have I done aught that you, in my case, would have left undone? Have I been insolent in triumph, or haughty in success? If so, hate me, nay, spurn me, now."

Walter turned his head irresolutely away.

"If it please you, that I accuse myself, in that I, a man seared and lone at heart, presumed to come within the pale of human affections;—that I exposed myself to cross another's better and brighter hopes, or dared to soften my fate with the tender and endearing ties that are meet alone for a more genial and youthful nature;—if it please you that I accuse and curse myself for this—that I yielded to it with pain and with self-reproach

that I shall think hereafter of what I unconsciously cost you, with remorse—then be consoled!"

"It is enough," said Walter; "let us part. I leave you with more soreness at my late haste than I will acknowledge; let that content you: for myself, I ask for no apology or—"

"But you shall have it amply," interrupted Aram, advancing with a cordial openness of mien not usual to him. "I was all to blame; I should have remembered you were an injured man, and suffered you to have said all you would. Words at best are but a poor vent for a wronged and burning heart. It shall be so in future: speak your will, attack, upbraid, taunt me, I will bear it all. And, indeed, even to myself there appears some witchcraft, some glamour, in what

has chanced. What! I favoured where you love? Is it possible? It might teach the vainest to forswear vanity. You, the young, the buoyant, the fresh, the beautiful!—And I, who have passed the glory and zest of life between dusty walls; I who—well, well, Fate laughs at probabilities!"

Aram now seemed relapsing into one of his more abstracted moods; he ceased to speak aloud, but his lips moved, and his eyes grew fixed in revery on the ground. Walter gazed at him for some moments with mixed and contending sensations. Once more, resentment and the bitter wrath of jealousy had faded back into the remoter depths of his mind, and a certain interest for his singular rival, despite of himself, crept into his breast. But this mysterious and fitful nature,—was it one in which the devoted Madeline would certainly find happiness and repose?—would she never regret her choice? This question obtruded itself upon him, and, while he sought to answer it, Aram, regaining his composure, turned abruptly and offered him his hand. Walter did not accept it; he bowed, with a cold aspect. "I cannot give my hand without my heart," said he; "we were foes just now; we are not friends yet. I am unreasonable in this, I know, but——"

"Be it so," interrupted Aram; "I understand you. I press my goodwill on you no more. When this pang is forgotten, when this wound is healed, and when you will have learned more of him who is now your rival, we may meet again, with other feelings on your side."

Thus they parted, and the solitary lamp which for weeks past had been quenched at the wholesome hour in the student's home, streamed from the casement throughout the whole of that night: was it a witness of the calm and learned vigil, or of the unresting heart?

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAMILY SUPPER.—THE TWO SISTERS IN THEIR CHAMBER.—A MISUNDERSTANDING FOLLOWED BY A CONFSSION.—WALTER'S APPROACHING DEPARTURE, AND THE CORPORAL'S BEHAVIOUR THEREON.—THE CORPORAL'S FAVOURITE INTRODUCED TO THE READER.—THE CORPORAL PROVES HIMSELF A SUBTLE DIPLOMATIST.

"So we grow together
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition"—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

"The corporal had not taken his measures so badly in this stroke of artilleryship."
—*Trotter Shandy.*

It was late that evening when Walter returned home: the little family were assembled at the last and lightest meal of the day; Ellenor closely made room for her cousin beside herself, and that little kind nose touched Walter. "Why did I not love her?" thought he, and he spoke to her in a tone so affectionate, that it made her heart thrill with delight. Lester was, on the whole, the most pensive of the group; but the old and young men exchanged looks of restored confidence, which, on the part of the former, were softened by a playful tenderness.

When the cloth was removed, and the servants gone, Lester took it on himself to break to the sisters the intended departure of their cousin. Madeline received the news with painful loneliness, and a certain self-reproach; for even where a woman has no cause to blame herself, she, in those cases, feels a sort of remorse at the untimeliness she occasions. But Ellenor rose suddenly and left the room.

"And now," said Lester, "London will I suppose be your first destination. I can furnish you with letters to some of my old friends there: merry fellows they were when you

must take care of the prodigality of their wine. There's John Courtland—ah! a seductive dog to drink with. Be sure and let me know how honest John looks, and what he says of me. I recollect him as if it were yesterday; a roguish eye, with a moisture in it; full cheeks; a straight nose; black curled hair; and teeth as even as dies:—honest John showed his teeth pretty often, too: ha, ha! how the dog loved a laugh! Well, and Peter Hales—Sir Peter now, has his uncle's largeness—a generous, open hearted fellow as ever lived—will ask you very often to dinner—nay, offer you money if you want it—but take care he does not lead you into extravagances: out of debt out of danger, Walter. It would have been well for poor Peter Hales, had he remembered that maxim. Often and often have I been to see him in the Marshalsea; but he was the born to good fortune, though his relations kept him close; so I suppose he is well off now. His estate he has—indeed, on your road to London; so, if he is at his country seat, you can beat up his quarters, and spend a month or so with him: a good long holiday follow."

With these little sketches of his contemporaries the good squire ended—

voured to while the time, taking, it is true, some pleasure in the youthful romances they excited, but chiefly desiring to enliven the melancholy of his nephew. When, however, Madeline had retired, and they were alone, he drew his chair closer to Walter's, and changed the conversation into a more serious and anxious strain. The guardian and the ward sat up late that night; and when Walter retired to rest, it was with a heart more touched by his uncle's kindness than his own sorrow.

But we are not about to close the day without a glance at the chamber which the two sisters held in common. The night was serene and starlit, and Madeline sat by the open window, leaning her face upon her hand, and gazing on the lone house of her lover, which might be seen afar across the landscape, the trees sleeping around it, and one pale and steady light gleaming from its lofty casement like a star.

"He has broken faith," said Madeline; "I shall chide him for this to-morrow. He promised me the light should be ever quenched before this hour."

"Nay," said Ellinor, in a tone somewhat sharpened from its native sweetness, and who now sat up in the bed, the curtain of which was half-drawn aside, and the soft light of the skies rested full upon her rounded neck and youthful countenance,—"nay, Madeline, do not loiter there any longer; the air grows sharp and cold, and the clock struck one several minutes since. Come, sister, come!"

"I cannot sleep," replied Madeline, sighing, "and think that yon light streams upon those studies which steal the healthful hues from his cheek, and the very life from his heart."

"You are infatuated,—you are bewitched by that man," said Ellinor, peevishly.

"And have I not cause—ample cause!" returned Madeline, with all a girl's beautiful enthusiasm, as the colour mantled her cheek, and gave it the only additional loveliness it could receive. "When he speaks, is it not like music!—or rather, what music so arrests and touches the heart! Methinks it is heaven only to gaze upon him, to note the changes of that majestic countenance, to set down as food for memory every look and every movement. But when the look turns to me,—when the voice utters my name, ah! Ellinor, *then* it is not a wonder that I love him thus much: but that any others should think they have known love, and yet not loved *him*! And, indeed, I feel assured that what the world calls love is not my love. Are there more Eugenes in the world than one? Who but Eugene *could* be loved as I love!"

"What! are there none as worthy?" said Ellinor, half smiling.

"Can you ask it!" answered Madeline, with a simple wonder in her voice: "whom would you compare—compare! nay, place within a hundred grades of the height which Eugene Aram holds in this little world!"

"This is folly—dotage," said Ellinor, indignantly: "surely there are others as brave, as gentle, as kind, and, if not so wise, yet more fitted for the world."

"You mock me," replied Madeline, incredulously; "whom could you select?"

Ellinor blushed deeply,—blushed from her snowy temples to her yet whiter bosom as she answered,—

"If I said Walter Leslie, could you deny it?"

"Walter!" repeated Madeline; "he equal to Eugene Aram!"

"Ay, and more than equal," said Ellinor, with spirit, and a warm and angry tone. "And, indeed, Madeline," she continued, after a pause, "I

lose something of that respect which, passing a sister's love, I have always borne towards you, when I see the unthinking and lavish idolatry you manifest to one who, but for a silver tongue and florid words, would rather want attractions than be the wonder you esteem him. Prie, Madeline! I blush for you when you speak; it is unmanly so to love any one!"

Madeline rose from the window; but the angry word died on her lips when she saw that Ellnor, who had worked her mind beyond her self-control, had thrown herself back on the pillow and now sobbed aloud.

The natural temper of the elder sister had always been much more calm and even than that of the younger, who united with her vivacity something of the passionate caprice and fittiness of her sex. And Madeline's affection for her had been tamed by that character of forbearance and soothing which a superior nature often manifests to one more imperfect, and which in this instance did not desert her. She gently closed the window, and, gliding to the bed, threw her arms around her sister's neck and kissed away her tears with a soothing fondness, that if Ellnor resumed for one moment she returned with equal tenderness the next.

"Indeed, dearest," said Madeline, gently, "I cannot guess how I hurt you, and still less how Eugene has offended you!"

"He has offended me in nothing," replied Ellnor, still weeping, "if he has not stolen away *all* your affection from me. But I was a foolish girl; forgive me, as you always do; and at this time I need your kindness, for I am very, very unhappy."

"Unhappy, dearest Nell, and why?"

Ellnor wept on without answering.

Madeline persisted in pressing for a reply; and at length her sister sobbed out,—

"I know that—that—Walter only

has eyes for you and a heart for you, who neglect, who despise his love; and I—I—but no matter, he is going to leave us, and of me—poor me, he will think no more!"

Ellnor's attachment to their cousin, Madeline had long half suspected, and she had often rallied her sister upon it; indeed, it might have been this suspicion which made her at the first steel her breast against Walter's evident preference to herself. But Ellnor had never till now seriously confessed how much her heart was affected; and Madeline, in the natural engrossment of her own ardent and devoted love, had not of late spared much observation to the tokens of her sister's. She was therefore dismayed, if not surprised, as she now perceived the cause of the perverseness Ellnor had just manifested, and by the nature of the love she felt herself, she judged, and perhaps somewhat overrated, the anguish that Ellnor endured.

She strove to comfort her by all the arguments which the fertile ingenuity of kindness could invent: she prophesied Walter's speedy return, with his boyish disappointment forgotten, and with eyes no longer blinded to the attractions of one sister by a heartless fancy for another. And though Ellnor interrupted her from time to time with assertions, now of Walter's eternal constancy to his present idol,—now with yet more vehement declarations of the certainty of his finding new objects for his affections in new scenes, she yet admitted, by little and little, the persuasive power of Madeline to creep onto her heart, and brighten away its griefs with hope, till at last, with the tears yet wet on her cheek, she fell asleep in her sister's arms.

And Madeline, though she would not stir from her post lest the more noise should awaken her sister, was yet prevented from closing her eyes in a similar repose: ever and anon

she breathlessly and gently raised herself to steal a glimpse of that solitary light afar; and ever, as she looked, the ray greeted her eyes with an unswerving and melancholy stillness, till the dawn crept greyly over the heavens, and that speck of light, holier to her than the stars, faded also with them beneath the broader lustre of the day.

The next week was passed in preparations for Walter's departure. At that time, and in that distant part of the country, it was greatly the fashion among the younger travellers to perform their excursions on horseback, and it was this method of conveyance that Walter preferred. The best steed in the squire's stables was therefore appropriated to his service, and a strong black horse with a Roman nose and a long tail was consigned to the mastery of Corporal Bunting. The squire was delighted that his nephew had secured such an attendant. For the soldier, though odd and selfish, was a man of some sense and experience, and Lester thought such qualities might not be without their use to a young master, new to the common frauds and daily usages of the world he was about to enter.

As for Bunting himself, he covered his secret exultation at the prospect of change and board-wages with the cool semblance of a man sacrificing his wishes to his affections. He made it his peculiar study to impress upon the squire's mind the extent of the sacrifice he was about to make. The bit cot had been just whitewashed, the pet cat just lain in; then, too, who would dig, and gather seeds in the garden, defend the plants (plants! the corporal could scarce count a dozen, and nine out of them were cabbages!) from the impending frosts! It was exactly, too, the time of year when the rheumatism paid flying visits to the bones and loins of the worthy corporal; and to think of his

"galavanting about the country" when he ought to be guarding against that sly foe, the lumbago, in the fortress of his chimney-corner!

To all these murmurs and insinuations the good Lester seriously inclined, not with the less sympathy, in that they invariably ended in the corporal's slapping his manly thigh, and swearing that he loved Master Walter like gunpowder, and that were it twenty times as much he would cheerfully do it for the sake of his handsome young honour. Ever at this peroration the eyes of the squire began to twinkle, and new thanks were given to the veteran for his disinterested affection, and new promises pledged him in inadequate return.

The pious Dealtry felt a little jealousy at the trust imparted to his friend. He halted, on his return from his farm, by the spruce stile which led to the demesne of the corporal, and eyed the warrior somewhat sourly, as he now, in the cool of the evening, sat without his door arranging his fishing tackle and flies in various little papers, which he carefully labelled by the help of a stunted pen that had seen at least as much service as himself.

"Well, neighbour Bunting," said the little landlord, leaning over the stile, but not passing its boundary, "and when do you go? You will have wet weather of it (looking up to the skies); you must take care of the rumatiz. At your age it's no trifle, eh—hem."

"My age! should like to know—what mean by that! my age, indeed!—augh!—bother!" grunted Bunting, looking up from his occupation. Peter chuckled inly at the corporal's displeasure, and continued, as in an apologetic tone:—

"Oh, I ax your pardon, neighbour. I don't mean to say you are too old to travel. Why there was Hal Whitel

eighty-two come next Michaelmas, took a trip to Lunnun last year, —

"For young and old, the stout, the poorly.
The good of food be on them surely!"

"Bother!" said the corporal, turning round on his seat.

"And what do you intend doing with the brindled cat I put 'un up in the saddle-bags? You won't surely have the heart to leave 'un."

"As to that," quoth the corporal, sighing, "the poor dumb animal makes me sad to think on't." And, putting down his fish-hooks, he stroked the sides of an enormous cat, who now, with tail on end, and back bowed up, and uttering her *lenca au-croous*—*Angled*, purr'd rubbed herself to and fro athwart the corporal's legs.

"What staring there for! won't ye step in, man! Can climb the stile I suppose—*laugh!*"

"No, thank ye, neighbour. I do very well here, that is, if you can hear me; your deafness is not so troublesome as it was last win—"

"Bother!" interrupted the corporal in a voice that made the little landlord start bolt upright from the easy confidence of his position. Nothing on earth so offended the perpendicular Jacob Bunting as any mention of increasing years or growing infirmities; but at this moment, as he meditated putting Deafery to some use, he prudently suppressed the gathering anger, and smiled like the man of the world he partly passed himself on being, in a voice gentle as a dying howl,—

"What fraid ont come in, there's good fellow want to speak to ye. Come do—*laugh!*" the last sound being prolonged into one of unutterable coaxingness, and accompanied with a beck of the hand and a wheedling wink.

These allurements the good Peter could not resist; he clambered the

stile, and seated himself on the bench beside the corporal.

"There now, fine fellow, sit for the forty-second," said Bunting, clapping him on the back. "Well, and—and—a beautiful cat, isn't her!"

"Ah!" said Peter, very shortly—for though a remarkably mild man, Peter did not love cats; moreover, we must now inform the reader that the cat of Jacob Bunting was one more feared than respected throughout the village. The corporal was a cunning instructor of all animals: he could teach goldfinches the use of the musket; dogs, the art of the broadsword; horses, to dance hornpipes and pick pockets; and he had relieved the *ennui* of his solitary moments by imparting sundry accomplishments to the ductile genius of his cat. Under his tuition puss had learned to fetch and carry; to turn over head and tail like a tumbler; to run up your shoulder when you least expected it; to fly as if she were mad at any one upon whom the corporal thought fit to set her; and, above all, to rob larders, shelves, and tables, and bring the produce to the corporal, who never failed to consider such stray waifs lawful manorial acquisitions. These little feline cultivations of talent, however delightful to the corporal, and creditable to his powers of teaching the young idea how to shoot, had, nevertheless since the truth must be told, rendered the corporal's cat a proverb and by word throughout the neighbourhood. Never was cat in such bad odour; and the dislike in which it was held was wonderfully increased by terror; for the creature was singularly large and robust, and withal of so courageous a temper that if you attempted to resist its invasion of your property it forthwith set up its back, put down its ears, opened its mouth, and bade you fully comprehend that what it feloniously seized it could gallantly defend. More

than one gossip in the village had this notable cat hurried into premature parturition as, on descending at daybreak into her kitchen, the dame would descrie the animal perched on the dresser, having entered Heaven knows how, and glaring upon her with its great green eyes, and a malignant *brownic* expression of countenance.

Various deputations had, indeed, from time to time arrived at the corporal's cottage requesting the death, expulsion, or perpetual imprisonment of the favourite. But the stout corporal received them grimly, and dismissed them gruffly, and the cat went on waxing in size and wickedness, and baffling, as if inspired by the devil, the various gins and traps set for its destruction. But never perhaps, was there a greater disturbance and perturbation in the little hamlet than when, some three weeks since, the corporal's cat was known to be brought to bed, and safely delivered of a numerous offspring. The village saw itself overrun with a race and a perpetuity of corporal's cats! Perhaps, too, their teacher growing more expert by practice, the descendants might attain to even greater accomplishment than their nefarious progenitor. No longer did the faint hope of being delivered from their tormentor by an untimely or even natural death occur to the harassed Grassdaliana. Death was an incident natural to one cat, however vivacious, but here was a dynasty of cats! *Principes mortales, respublica aterna!*

Now the corporal loved this creature better, yes, better than anything in the world except travelling and board wages; and he was sorely perplexed in his mind how he should be able to dispose of her safely in his absence. He was aware of the general enmity she had inspired, and trembled to anticipate its probable result when he was no longer by to

afford her shelter and protection. The squire had, indeed, offered her an asylum at the manor-house; but the squire's cook was the cat's most embittered enemy; and what man can answer for the peaceable behaviour of his cook? The corporal, therefore, with a reluctant sigh, renounced the friendly offer, and after lying awake three nights, and turning over in his mind the characters, consciences, and capabilities of all his neighbours, he came at last to the conviction that there was no one with whom he could so safely intrust his cat as Peter Dealtry. It is true, as we said before, that Peter was no lover of cats; and the task of persuading him to afford board and lodging to a cat, of all cats the most odious and malignant, was therefore no easy matter. But to a man of the world what intrigue is impossible!

The finest diplomatist in Europe might have taken a lesson from the corporal, as he now proceeded earnestly towards the accomplishment of his project.

He took the cat, which, by the by, we forgot to say that he had thought fit to christen after himself, and to honour with a name, somewhat lengthy for a cat (but, indeed, this was no ordinary cat!) viz. Jacobina—he took Jacobina then, we say, upon his lap, and, stroking her brindled sides with great tenderness, he bade Dealtry remark how singularly quiet the animal was in its manners. Nay, he was not contented until Peter himself had patted her with a timorous hand, and had reluctantly submitted the said hand to the honour of being licked by the cat in return. Jacobina, who, to do her justice, was always meek enough in the presence and at the will of her master, was, fortunately, this day, on her very best behaviour.

"Them dumt animals be mighty grateful," quoth the corporal.

"Ah!" rejoined Peter, wiping his hand with his pocket handkerchief.

"But, Lord! what scandal there be in the world!"

"Though stander's breath may raise a storm,

It quickly does decay!"

muttered Peter.

"Very well, very true; sensible verses those," said the corporal, approvingly; "and yet mischief's often done before the amends come. Body o' me, it makes a man sick of his kind, ashamed to belong to the race of men, to see the envy that abounds in this here sallowary wale of tears!" said the corporal, lifting up his eyes.

Peter stared at him with open mouth; the hypocritical rascal continued, after a pause,—

"Now there's Jacobina, 'cause she's a good cat, a faithful servant, the whole village is against her; such lies as they tell on her, such weppars, you'd think she was the devil in garret!" "I grant, I grant," added the corporal, in a tone of apologetic candour, "that she's wild, easy, knows her friends from her foes, steals Goodly Solomon's butter; but what then? Goodly Solomon's a dead beach; Goodly Solomon sold beer in opposition to you, set up a public; you do not like Goodly Solomons, Peter Dealtry?"

"If that were all Jacobina had done!" said the landlord, grinning.

"All! what else did she do?" Why she eat up John Tomkins's canary-bird; and did not John Tomkins, ever rascal! say you could not sing better nor a raven!"

"I have nothing to say against the poor creature for that," said Peter, clucking the cat of his own accord. "Cats will eat birds, 'tis the sportation of Providence. But what, corporal?" and Peter, hastily withdrawing his hand, thrust it into his breeches pocket. "but what! did not she scratch Joe Webster's little

boy's hand into ribbands, because the boy tried to prevent her running off with a ball of string?"

"And well," granted the corporal, "that was not Jacobina's doing; that was my doing. I wanted the string—offered to pay a penny for it—think of that!"

"It was priced two pence ha'penny," said Peter.

"Augh—laugh! you would not pay Joe Webster all he asks! What's the use of being a man of the world, unless one makes one's tradesmen hate a bit? Bargaining is not cheating, I hope!"

"Heaven forbid!" said Peter.

"But as to the bit string, Jacobina took it solely for your sake. Ah, she did not think you were to turn against her!"

So saying, the corporal got up, walked into his house, and presently came back with a little net in his hand.

"There, Peter, not for you, to hold lemons. Thank Jacobina for that; she got the string. Says I to her one day, as I was sitting, as I might be now, without the door, 'Jacobina, Peter Dealtry's a good fellow, and he keeps his lemons in a bag; bad habit,—get mouldy,—we'll make him a net;' and Jacobina purr'd (strike the poor creature, Peter!)—so Jacobina and I took a walk, and when we came to Joe Webster's, I pointed out the ball o' twine to her. So, for your sake, Peter, she got into this here scrape—ugh."

"Ah!" quoth Peter, laughing, "poor puss! poor pussy! poor little pussy!"

"And now, Peter," said the corporal, taking his friend's hand, "I am going to prove friendship to you—going to do you great favour."

"Alas!" said Peter, "my good friend, I'm very much obliged to you. I know your kind heart, but I really don't want any —"

"Bother!" cried the corporal; "I'm not the man as makes much of doing a friend a kindness. Hold jaw! tell you what,—tell you what—am going away on Wednesday at daybreak, and in my absence you shall ——" "

"What? my good corporal."

"Take charge of Jacobina!"

"Take charge of the devil!" cried Peter.

"Augh!—laugh!—what words are those! Listen to me."

"I won't!"

"You shall!"

"I'll be d—d if I do!" quoth Peter, sturdily. It was the first time he had been known to swear since he was parish clerk!

"Very well, very well!" said the corporal, chucking up his chin, "Jacobina can take care of herself! Jacobina knows her friends and her foes as well as her master! Jacobina never injures her friends, never forgives foes. Look to yourself! look to yourself! insult my cat, insult me! Swear at Jacobina, indeed!"

"If she steals my cream!" cried Peter.

"Did she ever steal your cream?"

"No! but, if——"

"Did she ever steal your cream?"

"I can't say she ever did."

"Or anything else of yours?"

"Not that I know of; but——"

"Never too late to mend."

"If——"

"Will you listen to me, or not?"

"Well."

"You'll listen?"

"Yea."

"Know then, that I wanted to do you kindness."

"Humph!"

"Hold jaw! I taught Jacobina all she knows."

"More's the pity!"

"Hold jaw! I taught her to respect her friends,—never to commit herself in-doors—never to steal at home—never to fly at home—never to scratch

at home—to kill mice and rats—bring all she catches to her master—to do what he tells her—and to defend his house as well as a mastiff: and this invaluable creature I was going to lend you—won't now, d—d if I do!"

"Humph."

"Hold jaw! When I'm gone, Jacobina will have no one to feed her. She'll feed herself—will go to every larder, every house in the place—your's best larder, best house:—will come to you oftenest. In your wife attempts to drive her away, scratch her eyes out; if you disturb her, serve you worse than Joe Webster's little boy:—wanted to prevent this—won't now, d—d if I do!"

"But, corporal, how would it mend the matter to take the devil in-doors?"

"Devil! don't call names. Did not I tell you, only one Jacobina does not hurt is her master!—make you her master: now d'ye see?"

"It is very hard," said Peter, grumblingly, "that the only way I can defend myself from this villainous creature is to take her into my house."

"Villainous! You ought to be proud of her affection. *She* returns good for evil—she always loved you; see how she rubs herself against you—and that's the reason why I selected you from the whole village, to take care of her; but you at once injure yourself and refuse to do your friend a service. Howsoever, you know I shall be with young aquire, and he'll be master here one of these days, and I shall have an influence over him—you'll see—you'll see. Look that there's not another Spotted Dog set up—ugh!—bother!"

"But what would my wifesay, if I took the cat? she can't abide its name."

"Let me alone to talk to your wife. What would she say if I bring her from Lannun town a fine silk gown, or a neat shawl with a blue border—blue becomes her, or a tay-chest—that will do for you both, and would set off

the little back parlour? Mahogany tuxchest, inland at top—mirrors in silver, J. B. to D. and P. D., two boxes for tux, and a bowl for sugar in the middle.—Ah! ah! Love me, love my cat! When was Jacob Hunting ungrateful!—baugh!”

“Well, well! will you talk to Dorothy about it?”

“I shall have your consent, then! Thanks my dear, dear Peter; ’pon my soul you re a fine fellow! you see, you re great man of the parish. If you protect her, none dare injure; if you scout her, all set upon her. For, as you said, or rather sung, t’other Sunday—capital voice you were in, too,—

“The mighty tyrants without cause,
Conquer her wood to shute!”

“I did not think you had so good a memory, corporal,” said Peter, smiling;—the cat was now curling itself up in his lap: “after all, Jacobina—what a dunc of a name!—seems gentle enough.”

“Gentle as a lamb, soft as butter, kind as cream, and such a mouser!”

“But I don’t think Dorothy—”

“I’ll settle Dorothy.”

“Well, when will you look up?”

“Come and take a dish of tux with you in half an hour;—you want a new tuxchest, something new and comely.”

“I think we do,” said Peter, rising and gently depositing the cat on the ground.

“Ah! we’ll see to it!—we’ll see! Good-by for the present—in half an hour be with you!”

The corporal, left alone with Jacobina, eyed her intently, and burst into the following pathetic address:—

“Well, Jacobina! you little know the pains I takes to serve you—the luv I tells for you—endangered my precious soul for your sake, you jade! Ah! may well rub your sides against me. Jacobina! Jacobina! you be only thing in the world that cares

a button for me. I have neither kith nor kin. You are daughter—friend—wife to me: if anything happened to you, I should not have the heart to love anything else. And body o’ me, but you be as kind as any mistress, and much more tractable than any wife; but the world gives you a bad name, Jacobina. Why? Is it that you do worse than the world do! You has no morality in you, Jacobina, well but has the world! No! But it has humbug—you have no humbug, Jacobina. On the faith of a man, Jacobina, you be better than the world!—baugh! You takes care of your own interest, but you takes care of your master’s too!—You loves me as well as yourself. Now cats can say the same, Jacobina! and no gossip that flings a stone at your pretty brindled skin, can say half as much. We must not forget your kittens, Jacobina; you have four left—they must be provided for. Why not a cat’s children as well as a courtier’s! I have got you a comfortable home, Jacobina; take care of yourself, and don’t fall in love with every tom-cat in the place. Be sober, and lead a single life till my return. Come, Jacobina, we will lock up the house, and go and see the quarters I have provided for you.—Ho! ho!”

As he finished his harangue, the corporal locked the door of his cottage, and Jacobina, trotting by his side, he stalked with his usual statelyness to *The Spotted Dog*.

Dame Dorothy Dooltry reserved him with a clouded brow; but the man of the world knew whom he had to deal with. On Wednesday morning Jacobina was introduced into the comforts of the hearth of mine host;—and her four little kittens moved hand by hand from the seclusion of a basket lined with flannel.

Reader, Here is wisdom in this chapter: it is not every man who knows how to dispose of his cat

CHAPTER XII.

A STRANGE HABIT.—WALTER'S INTERVIEW WITH MADELINE.—HER GENEROUS AND CONFIDING DISPOSITION.—WALTER'S ANGER.—THE PARTING MEAL.—CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE UNCLE AND NEPHEW.—WALTER ALONE.—SLEEP THE BLESSING OF THE YOUNG.

Falk. Out, out, unworthy to speak where he breatheth,

* * * * *

Past. Well now, my whole venture is forth, I will resolve to depart."

BEN JONSON: *Every Man out of his Humour.*

It was now the eve before Walter's departure, and on returning home from a farewell walk among his favourite haunts, he found Aram, whose visit had been made during Walter's absence, now standing on the threshold of the door, and taking leave of Madeline and her father. Aram and Walter had only met twice before since the interview we recorded, and each time Walter had taken care that the meeting should be but of short duration. In these brief encounters Aram's manner had been even more gentle than heretofore; that of Walter's more cold and distant. And now, as they thus unexpectedly met at the door, Aram, looking at him earnestly, said,

"Farewell, sir! You are to leave us for some time, I hear. Heaven speed you!" Then he added, in a lower tone, "Will you take my hand, now, in parting?"

As he said, he put forth his hand,—it was the left.

"Let it be the right hand," observed the elder Lester, smiling: "it is a luckier omen."

"I think not," said Aram, dryly.

And Walter noted that he had never remembered him to give his right hand to any one, even to Madeline: the peculiarity of this habit might, however arise from an awkward early

habit; it was certainly scarce worth observing, and Walter had already coldly touched the hand extended to him when Lester said carelessly,

"Is there any superstition that makes you think, as some of the ancients did, the left hand luckier than the right?"

"Yes," replied Aram; "a superstition. Adieu."

The student departed; Madeline slowly walked up one of the garden alleys, and thither Walter, after whispering to his uncle, followed her.

There is something in those bitter feelings which are the offspring of disappointed love; something in the intolerable anguish of well-founded jealousy, that, when the first shock is over, often hardens, and perhaps elevates the character. The sterner powers that we arouse within us to combat a passion that can no longer be worthily indulged, are never afterwards wholly allayed. Like the allies which a nation summons to its bosom to defend it from its foes, they expel the enemy only to find a settlement for themselves. The mind of every man who conquers an unfortunate attachment becomes stronger than before; it may be for evil, it may be for good, but the capacities for either are more vigorous and collected.

The last few weeks had done more

for Walter's character than years of ordinary, even of happy emotion, might have effected. He had passed from youth to manhood, and with the sadness, had acquired also something of the dignity, of experience. Not that we would say that he had subdued his love, but he had made the first step towards it; he had resolved that at all hazards it should be subdued.

As he now joined Madeline, and she perceived him by her side, her embarrassment was more evident than his. She feared some avowal, and, from his temper, perhaps some violence, on his part. However, she was the first to speak: women in such cases, always are.

"It is a beautiful evening," said she, "and the sun set in promise of a fine day for your journey to-morrow."

Walter stood on silently; his heart was full. "Madeline," he said at length, "dear Madeline, give me your hand. Nay, do not fear me; I know what you think, and you are right: I loved—I still love you; but I know well that I can have no hope in making this avowal, and when I ask you for your hand, Madeline, it is only to convince you that I have no suit to press: had I, I would not dare to touch that hand."

Madeline, wondering and embarrassed, gave him her hand: he held it for a moment with a trembling clasp, pressed it to his lips, and then resigned it.

"Yes, Madeline, my cousin, my sweet cousin; I have loved you deeply, but silently, long before my heart could unravel the mystery of the feelings with which it glowed. But this—all this—it were now idle to repeat. I know that the heart whose possession would have made my whole life a dream, a transport, is given to another. I have not sought you now, Madeline, to repine at this, or to vex

you by the tale of any suffering I may endure: I am come only to give you the parting wishes, the parting blessing of one who, wherever he goes, or whatever befall him, will always think of you as the brightest and loveliest of human beings. May you be happy, yes even with another!"

"Oh, Walter!" said Madeline, affected to tears, "if I ever encouraged—if I ever led you to hope for more than the warm, the sisterly affection I bear you, how bitterly I should reproach myself!"

"You never did, dear Madeline: I asked for no inducement to love you,—I never dreamed of seeking a motive or inquiring if I had cause to hope. But as I am now about to quit you, and as you confess you feel for me a sister's affection, will you give me leave to speak to you as a brother might?"

Madeline held out her hand to him with frank cordiality. "Yes!" said she, "speak!"

"Then," said Walter, turning away his head in a spirit of delicacy that did him honour, "is it yet all too late for me to say one word of caution that relates to—Eugene Aram?"

"Of caution? you alarm me, Walter: speak, has aught happened to him? I saw him as lately as your self: Does aught threaten him? Speak, I implore you,—quick!"

"I know of no danger to him!" replied Walter, stung to perceive the breathless anxiety with which Madeline spoke, "but pause, my cousin, may there be no danger to you from this man?"

"Walter!"

"I grant him wise, learned, gentle,—nay, more than all, bearing about him a spell, a fascination, by which he softens, or awes at will, and which even I cannot resist. But yet his abstracted mood, his gloomy life, certain words that have broken from him unawares,—certain tell-tale emotions

which words of mine, heedlessly said, have fiercely aroused, all united, inspire me—shall I say it—with fear and distrust. I cannot think him altogether the calm and pure being he appears. Madeline, I have asked myself again and again, is this suspicion the effect of jealousy? do I see his bearing with the jaundiced eye of disappointed rivalry? And I have satisfied my conscience that my judgment is not thus biased. Stay! listen yet a little while! You have a high, a thoughtful mind. Exert it now. Consider your whole happiness rests on one step! Pause, examine, compare! Remember, you have not of Aram, as of those whom you have hitherto mixed with, the eye-witness of a life! You can know but little of his real temper, his secret qualities; still less of the tenor of his former existence. I only ask of you, for your own sake, for my sake, your sister's sake, and your good father's, not to judge too rashly! Love him, if you will; but observe him!"

"Have you done?" said Madeline, who had hitherto with difficulty contained herself; "then hear me. Was it I—was it Madeline Lester whom you asked to play the watch, to enact the spy upon the man whom she exults in loving? Was it not enough that you should descend to mark down each incautious look—to chronicle every heedless word—to draw dark deductions from the unsuspecting confidence of my father's friend—to lie in wait—to hang with a foe's malignity upon the unbendings of familiar intercourse—to extort anger from gentleness itself, that you might wrest the anger into crime! Shame, shame upon you for the meanness! And must you also suppose that I, to whose trust he has given his noble heart, will receive it only to play the eavesdropper to its secrets? Away!"

The generous blood crimsoned the cheek and brow of this high-spirited

girl, as she uttered her galling reproof; her eyes sparkled, her lip quivered, her whole frame seemed to have grown larger with the majesty of indignant love.

"Cruel, unjust, ungrateful!" ejaculated Walter, pale with rage, and trembling under the conflict of his roused and wounded feelings. "Is it thus you answer the warning of too disinterested and self-forgetful a love?"

"Love!" exclaimed Madeline. "Grant me patience!—Love! It was but now I thought myself honoured by the affection you said you bore me. At this instant, I blush to have called forth a single sentiment in one who knows so little what love is! Love!—methought that word denoted all that was high and noble in human nature—confidence, hope, devotion, sacrifice of all thought of self! but you would make it the type and concentration of all that lowers and debases!—suspicion—cavil—fear—selfishness in all its shapes! Out on you!—love!"

"Enough, enough! Say no more, Madeline; say no more. We part not as I had hoped: but be it so. You are changed indeed, if your conscience smite you not hereafter for this injustice. Farewell, and may you never regret, not only the heart you have rejected, but the friendship you have belied." With these words, and choked by his emotions, Walter hastily strode away.

He hurried into the house, and into a little room adjoining the chamber in which he slept, and which had been also appropriated solely to his use. It was now spread with boxes and trunks, some half-packed, some corded, and inscribed with the address to which they were to be sent in London. All these mute tokens of his approaching departure struck upon his excited feelings with a suddenness that overpowered him.

"And it is thus—thus," said he, aloud, "that I am to leave, for the first time, my childhood's home!"

He threw himself on his chair, and, covering his face with his hands, burst, fairly subdued and unmanned, into a paroxysm of tears.

When this emotion was over, he felt as if his love for Madeline had also disappeared; a sore and insulted feeling was all that her image now recalled to him. This idea gave him some consolation. "Thank Heaven!" he muttered, "thank Heaven, I am cured at last!"

The thank-giving was scarcely over, before the door opened softly, and Elzener, not perceiving him where he sat, entered the room, and laid on the table a purse which she had long promised to knit him, and which seemed now designed as a parting gift.

She sighed heavily as she laid it down, and he observed that her eyes seemed red as with weeping.

He did not move, and Elzener left the room without discovering him; but he remained there till dark, leaning on her apparition; and before he went down stairs he took up the little purse, kissed it, and put it carefully into his bosom.

He sat on it to Elzener at supper that evening; and, though he did not say much, his last words were more to her than words had ever been before. When he took leave of her for the night, he whispered, as he kissed her cheek, "God bless you, dearest Elzener! and till I return take care of yourself, for the sake of one who loves you more, better than any thing on earth."

Lester had just left the room to write some letters for Walter, and Madeline, who had hitherto sat absorbed and silent by the window, approached Walter, and offered him her hand.

"Forgive me, my dear cousin," she

said, in her softest voice. "I feel that I was hasty, and to blame. Believe me, I am now at least grateful, warmly grateful, for the kindness of your motives."

"Not so," said Walter bitterly; "the advice of a friend is only meanness."

"Come, come, forgive me; pray do not let us part unkindly. When did we ever quarrel before? I was wrong, grievously wrong—I will perform any penance you may enjoin."

"Agreed, then: follow my admonitions."

"Ah! anything else," said Madeline, gravely, and colouring deeply.

Walter said no more; he pressed her hand lightly, and turned away.

"Is all forgiven?" said she, in so bewitching a tone, and with so bright a smile, that Walter, against his conscience, answered "Yes."

The sisters left the room; I know not which of the two received his last glance.

Lester now returned with the letters. "There is one charge, my dear boy," said he, in concluding the moral injunctions and experienced suggestions with which the young generally leave the ancestral home—"there is one charge which I need not commend to your ingenuity and zeal. You know my strong conviction, that your father, my poor brother, still lives. Is it necessary for me to tell you to exert yourself by all ways, and in all means, to discover some clue to his fate? Who knows," added Lester, with a smile, "but that you may find him a rich nabob? I confess that I should feel but little surprise if it were so; but, at all events, you will make every possible inquiry. I have written down in this paper the few particulars concerning him which I have been enabled to glean since he left his home; the places where he was last seen, the false names he assumed, &c. I shall wait with great

anxiety for any fuller success to your researches."

"You needed not, my dear uncle," said Walter, seriously, "to have spoken to me on this subject. No one, not even yourself, can have felt what I have—can have cherished the same anxiety, nursed the same hope, indulged the same conjecture. I have not, it is true, often of late years spoken to you on a matter so near to us both; but I have spent whole hours in guesses at my father's fate, and in dreams that for me was reserved the proud task to discover it. I will not say, indeed, that it makes at this moment the chief motive for my desire to travel, but in travel it will become my chief object. Perhaps I may find him not only rich—that, for my part, is but a minor wish—but sobered, and reformed from the errors and wildness of his earlier manhood. Oh, what should be his gratitude to you for all the care with which you have supplied to the forsaken child the father's place; and not the least, that you have, in softening the colours of his conduct, taught me still to prize and seek for a father's love!"

"You have a kind heart, Walter," said the good old man, pressing his nephew's hand, "and that has more than repaid me for the little I have done for you: it is better to sow a good heart with kindness than a field with corn, for the heart's harvest is perpetual."

Many, and earnest, that night, were the meditations of Walter Lester. He was about to quit the home in which youth had been passed—in which first love had been formed and blighted; the world was before him; but there was something more grave than pleasure—more steady than enterprise—that beckoned him to its path. The deep mystery that for so many years had hung over the fate of his parent, it might indeed be his lot to pierce;

and, with a common waywardness in our nature, the restless son felt his interest in that parent the livelier, from the very circumstance of remembering nothing of his person. Affection had been nursed by curiosity and imagination; and the bad father was thus more fortunate in winning the heart of the son, than had he, perhaps, by the tenderness of years, deserved that affection.

Oppressed and feverish, Walter opened the lattice of his room, and looked forth on the night. The broad harvest-moon was in the heavens, and filled the air as with a softer and holier day. At a distance its light just gave the dark outline of Aram's house, and beneath the window it lay, bright and steady on the green, still churchyard, that adjoined the house. The air and the light allayed the fitfulness at the young man's heart, but served to solemnise the project and desire with which it beat. Still leaning from the casement, with his eyes fixed upon the tranquil scene below, he poured forth the prayer, that to his hands might the discovery of his lost sire be granted. The prayer seemed to lift the oppression from his breast; he felt cheerful and relieved, and, flinging himself on his bed, soon fell into the sound and healthful sleep of youth. And oh! let Youth cherish that happiest of earthly boons while yet it is at its command;—for there cometh the day to all, when "neither the voice of the lute nor the birds"* shall bring back the sweet slumbers that fell on their young eyes, as unbidden as the dew. It is a dark epoch in a man's life when sleep forsakes him; when he tosses to and fro, and thought will not be silenced, when the drug and draught are the courtiers of stupefaction, not sleep; when the down pillow is as a knotted log; when the eyelids close but with

* "Non avium citharæque," &c.—HORACE

an effort, and there is a drag, and a weight, and a dizziness in the eyes at morn. Desire, and grief, and love, these are the young man's torments; but they are the creatures of time. Time removes them as it brings, and the vigils we keep. "while the evil days come not," if weary, are brief and few. But memory, and care, and ambition, and avarice, *these* are demon-gods that *defy* the Time that fathered them.

The world's passions are the guests of mature years, and their grave is dug but in our own. As the dark spirits in the northern tale, that watch against the coming of one of a brighter and holier race, lest, if he seize them unawares, he bind them prisoners in his chain, they keep ward at night over the entrance of that deep cave—the human heart—and scare away the angel Sleep.

BOOK II.

— 'Αμφὶ δ' ἀνθρώ-
 πων φρεσὶν δυσλᾶκίαι
 Ἀναριθματοὶ κρίμονται.
 Τοῦτο δ' ἀμάχανον εὐρέω,
 Ὅτι νῦν, καὶ ἐν τελευ-
 τῇ φέρτατος ἀνδρὶ τυχέω.
PIND. O. vii. 6.

Innumerable, o'er their human prey,
 Grim errors hang the boarded sorrow;
 There' vapour gleams the present day,
 And darkness wraps the morrow.
Pindar.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARRIAGE SETTLED.—LESTER'S HOPES AND SCHEMES.—GAITY OF TEMPER
A GOOD SPECULATION.—THE TRUTH AND FERVOUR OF ARAM'S LOVE.

"Love is better than a pair of spectacles, to make every thing seem greater which is seen through it."—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY: *Arcadia*.

ARAM's affection to Madeline having now been formally announced to Lester, and Madeline's consent having been somewhat less formally obtained, it only remained to fix the time for their wedding. Though Lester forbore to question Aram as to his circumstances, the student frankly confessed, that, if not affording what the generality of persons would consider even a competence, they enabled one of his moderate wants and retired life (especially in the remote and cheap district in which they lived), to dispense with all fortune in a wife, who, like Madeline, was equally with himself unacquainted of obscurity. The good Lester, however, proposed to bestow upon his daughter such a portion as might allow for the wants of an increased family, or the probable contingencies of Fate. For though Madeline may often slacken her wheel, there is no spot in which she suffers it to be wholly still.

It was now the middle of September, and by the end of the ensuing month it was agreed that the sponsals

of the lovers should be held. It is certain that Lester felt one pang for his nephew as he subscribed to this proposal; but he consoled himself with recurring to a hope he had long cherished, viz., that Walter would return home not only cured of his vain attachment to Madeline, but with the disposition to admit the attractions of her sister. A marriage between these two cousins had for years been his favourite project. The lively and ready temper of Ellinor, her household turn, her merry laugh, a winning playfulness that characterised even her defects, were all more after Lester's secret heart than the graver and higher nature of his elder daughter. This might mainly be that they were traits of disposition that more reminded him of his lost wife, and were, therefore, more accordant with his ideal standard of perfection; but I incline also to believe that the more persons advance in years, the more, even if of staid and sober temper themselves, they love gaiety and elasticity in youth.

I have often pleased myself by observing, in some happy family circle embracing all ages, that it is the liveliest and wildest child that charms the grandest the most. And after all it is, perhaps, with characters as with books, the grave and thoughtful may be more admired than the light and cheerful, but they are less liked: it is not only that the former, being of a more abstruse and recondite nature, find fewer persons capable of judging of their merits, but also that the great object of the majority of human beings is to be amused, and that they naturally incline to love those the best who amuse them most. And to so great a practical extent is this preference pushed, that I think were a nice observer to make a census of all those who have received legacies, or dropped unexpectedly into fortunes, he would find that where one grave disposition had so benefited, there would be at least twenty gay. Perhaps, however, it may be said that I am, here, taking the cause for the effect!

But to return from our speculative disquisitions: Lester, then, who though he had so slowly discovered his nephew's passion for Madeline, had long since guessed the secret of Ellener's affection for him, looked forward with a hope rather sanguine than anxious to the ultimate realisation of his cherished domestic scheme. And he pleased himself with thinking that when all soreness would, by this double wedding, be banished from Walter's mind, it would be impossible to conceive a family group more united or more happy.

And Ednor herself, ever since the parting words of her cousin, had seemed, so far from being inconsolable for his absence, more bright of cheek and elastic of step than she had been for months before. What a world of all feelings which forbid despondence, lies hoarded in the hearts of the

young! As one fountain is filled by the channels that exhaust another, we cherish wisdom at the expense of hope. It thus happened, from one cause or another, that Walter's absence created a less cheerless blank in the family circle than might have been expected; and the approaching nuptials of Madeline and her lover naturally diverted, in a great measure, the thoughts of each, and engrossed their conversation.

Whatever might be Madeline's infatuation as to the merits of Aram, one merit, the greatest of all in the eyes of a woman who loves, he at least possessed. Never was mistress more burningly and deeply loved than she, who, for the first time, awoke the long slumbering passions in the heart of Eugene Aram. Every day the ardour of his affections seemed to increase. With what anxiety he watched her footsteps! with what idolatry he hung upon her words! with what unspeakable and yearning emotion he gazed upon the changeful eloquence of her cheek! Now that Walter was gone he almost took up his abode at the manor-house. He came thither in the early morning, and rarely returned home before the family retired for the night; and even then, when all was hushed, and they believed him in his solitary home, he lingered for hours around the house, to look up to Madeline's window, charmed to the spot which held the intoxication of her presence. Madeline discovered this habit, and chid it; but so tenderly, that it was not cured. And still at times, by the autumnal moon, she marked from her window his dark figure gliding among the shadows of the trees, or passing by the lowly tombs in the still churchyard—the resting place of hearts that once, perhaps, beat as wildly as his own.

It was impossible that a love of this order, and from one so richly gifted as Aram, — a love, which in substance

was truth, and yet in language poetry, could fall wholly to sublime and on that a girl so young, so romantic, so enthusiastic, as Madeline Lester. How intense and delicious must have been her sense of happiness! In the bare heart of a girl loving for the first

time, love is far more ecstatic than in men, inasmuch as it is unfevered by desire; love, then and there, makes the only state of human existence which is at once capable of calmness and transport!

CHAPTER II.

A FAVOURABLE SPECIMEN OF A NOBLEMAN AND A COUNTRY.—A MAN OF SOME FAULTS AND MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

"Titulus Capite is to rehearse. He is a man of an excellent disposition, and to be numbered among the chief ornaments of his age. The cultivates literature—he loves men of learning. &c."—Lord GRANGE'S *Præp.*

ABOUT this time, the Earl of * * *, the great nobleman of the district, and whose residence was within a few miles of Grasseville, came down to pay his wanted yearly visit to his country domains. He was a man well known in the history of the times, though, for various reasons, I omit his name. He was a courtier,—deep, wily, accomplished, but capable of generous sentiments and enlarged views. Though, torn equally by his interests, he seemed and lived as it were upon the floating spirit of the day, the penetration of his intellect went far beyond its reach. He claims the merit of having been the one, of all his contemporaries (and Chatterfield alone excepted), who most directly saw, and most distinctly prophesied, the dark and fearful storm that, at the close of the century, burst over France—visiting indeed the sins of the fathers upon the sons.

From the small circle of pompous trifles in which the dwellers of a court are condemned to live, and which he brightened by his talents and graced by his accomplishments, his extensive and far-sighted mind of Lord * * * comprehended the

vast field without, usually invisible to those of his habits and profession. Men who the best know the little nucleus which is called the world, are often the most ignorant of mankind; but it was the peculiar attribute of this nobleman, that he could not only analyse the external customs of his species, but also penetrate into their deeper and more hidden interests.

The works and correspondence he has left behind him, though far from voluminous, testify a consummate knowledge of the varieties of human nature. The refinement of his taste appears less remarkable than the vigour of his understanding. It might be that he knew the vices of men better than their virtues; yet he was no shallow disbeliever in the latter; he read the heart too accurately not to know that it is guided as often by its affections as its interests. In his early life he had incurred, not without truth, the charge of looseness; but, even in pursuit of pleasure, he had been neither weak on the one hand, nor gross on the other,—neither the headlong dupe nor the callous sensualist; but his

graces, his rank, his wealth, had made his conquests a matter of too easy purchase; and hence, like all voluptuaries, the part of his worldly knowledge which was the most fallible, was that which related to the sex. He judged of women by a standard too distinct from that by which he judged of men, and considered those foibles peculiar to the sex, which in reality are incident to human nature.

His natural disposition was grave and reflective; and though he was not without wit, it was rarely used. He lived, necessarily, with the frivolous and the ostentatious; yet ostentation and frivolity were charges never brought against himself. As a diplomatist and a statesman, he was of the old and erroneous school of intriguers; but his favourite policy was the science of conciliation. He was one who would so far have suited the present age, that no man could better have steered a nation from the chances of war: James the First could not have been inspired with a greater affection for peace, but the peer's dexterity would have made that peace as honourable as the king's weakness made it degraded. Ambitious to a certain extent, but neither grasping nor mean, he never obtained for his genius the full and extensive field it probably deserved. He loved a happy life above all things; and he knew that, while activity is the spirit, fatigue is the bane, of happiness.

In his day he enjoyed a large share of that public attention which generally bequeaths fame; yet, from several causes (of which his own moderation is not the least), his present reputation is infinitely less great than the opinions of his most distinguished contemporaries foreboded.

It is a more difficult matter for men of high rank to become illustrious to posterity, than for persons

in a sterner and more wholesome walk of life. Even the greatest among the distinguished men of the patrician order, suffer in the eyes of the after age for the very qualities, chiefly dazzling defects or brilliant eccentricities, which made them most popularly remarkable in their day. Men forgive Burns his amours and his revellings, with greater ease than they will forgive Bolingbroke and Byron for the same offences.

Our earl was fond of the society of literary men; he himself was well, perhaps even deeply, read. Certainly his intellectual acquisitions were more profound than they have been generally esteemed, though, with the common subtlety of a ready genius, he could make the quick adaptation of a timely fact, acquired for the occasion, appear the rich overflowing of a copious erudition. He was a man who instantly perceived, and liberally acknowledged, the merits of others. No connoisseur had a more felicitous knowledge of the arts, or was more just in the general objects of his patronage. In short, what with all his advantages, he was one whom an aristocracy may boast of, though a people may forget; and, if not a great man, was at least a most remarkable lord.

The Earl of * * *, in his last visit to his estates, had not forgotten to seek out the eminent scholar who shed an honour upon his neighbourhood; he had been greatly struck with the bearing and conversation of Aram; and, with the usual felicity with which the accomplished earl adapted his nature to those with whom he was thrown, he had succeeded in ingratiating himself with Aram in return. He could not, indeed, persuade the haughty and solitary student to visit him at the castle; but the earl did not disdain to seek any one from whom he could obtain instruction, and he had twice

or three voluntarily encountered Aram, and effectually drawn him from his reserve. The earl now heard with some pleasure and more surprise, that the master of the house was about to be married to the beauty of the county, and he resolved to seize the first occasion to call at the manor-house to offer his compliments and congratulations to its inmates.

Sensible men of rank who, having enjoyed their dignity from their birth, may reasonably be expected to grow occasionally tired of it; often like mixing with those the most who are the least dazzled by the consideration. I do not mean to say, with the vulgar *parvenus* who mistake richness for independence,—no man forgives respect to another who knows the value of respect to himself; but the respect should be paid easily; it is not every *Grand Seigneur* who, like *Ivan the Fourth*, is only pleased when he puts those he addresses out of countenance.

There was therefore, much in the compliments of Lester's manners and those of his niece, which rendered the family at the manor-house especial favourites with Lord * * *, and the wealthier but less honoured equerries of the county, stiff in awkward pride, and bustling with yet more awkward veneration, heard with astonishment and anger of the numerous visits which his lordship, in his brief sojourn at the castle, always contrived to pay to the hostess, and the constant invitations which they resorted to his most familiar festivities.

Lord * * * was no sportsman; and one morning, when all his guests were engaged among the stables of Stagshead, he mounted his quiet palfrey, and quietly took his way to the manor-house.

It was towards the latter end of the month, and one of the earliest of the autumnal fogs hung thinly over the

landscape. As the earl wound along the sides of the hill on which his castle was built, the scene on which he gazed below removed from the grey mists capriciously hovering over it, a dim and melancholy wilderness. A broader and whiter vapour, that streaked the lower part of the valley, betrayed the course of the rivulet; and beyond, to the left, rose, wan and spectral, the spire of the little church adjoining Lester's abode. As the horseman's eye wandered to this spot, the sun suddenly broke forth, and lit up as by enchantment the quiet and lovely hamlet, embosomed as it were beneath,—the cottages, with their gay gardens and jamedined porches,—the streamlet half in mist, half in light, while here and there columns of vapour rose above its surface like the chariots of the water genii, and broke into a thousand hues beneath the smiles of the unexpected sun: but far to the right, the mists around it yet unbroken, and the outline of its form only visible, rose the lone house of the student, as if there the sadder spirits of the air yet rallied their broken armament of mist and shadow.

The earl was not a man peculiarly alive to scenery, but he now involuntarily checked his horse, and gazed for a few moments on the beautiful and singular aspect which the landscape had so suddenly assumed. As he so gazed, he observed in a field at some little distance three or four persons gathered round a bank, and among them he thought he recognised the comely form of Rowland Lester. A second inspection convinced him that he was right in his conjecture, and, turning from the road through a gap in the hedge, he made towards the group in question. He had not proceeded far, before he saw that the remainder of the party was composed of Lester's daughters, the lover of the elder and a fourth, whom he recog-

nised as a celebrated French botanist, who had lately arrived in England, and who was now making an amateur excursion throughout the more attractive districts of the island.

The earl guessed rightly, that Monsieur de N—— had not neglected to apply to Aram for assistance in a

pursuit which the latter was known to have cultivated with such success, and that he had been conducted hither as to a place affording some specimen or another not unworthy of research. He now, giving his horse to his groom, joined the group

CHAPTER III.

WHEREIN THE EARL AND THE STUDENT CONVERSE ON GLAVE BUT DELIGHTFUL MATTERS.—THE STUDENT'S NOTION OF THE ONLY EARTHLY HAPPINESS.

"Aram. If the witch Hope forbids us to be wise,
Yet when I turn to these—Woe's only friends, *[Pointing to his books.*
And with their weird and eloquent voices calm
The stir and Babel of the world within,
I can but dream that my wax'd years at last
Shall find the quiet of a hermit's cell :—
And, neighbouring not this worn and jaded world,
Beneath the lambent eyes of the loved stars,
And, with the hollow rocks and sparry caves,
The tides, and all the many-musied winds,
My oracles and ommates :—watch my life
Glide down the Stream of Knowledge, and behold
Its waters with a musing stillness glass
The thousand hues of Nature and of Heaven."

From "Eugene Aram," a MS. Tragedy.

THE earl continued with the party he had joined : and when their occupation was concluded, and they turned homeward, he accepted the squire's frank invitation to partake of some refreshment at the manor-house. It so chanced, or perhaps the earl so contrived it, that Aram and himself, in their way to the village, lingered a little behind the rest, and that their conversation was thus, for a few minutes, not altogether general.

"Is it I, Mr. Aram," said the earl, smiling, "or is it Fate that has made you a convert? The last time we sagely and quietly conferred together, you contended that the more the circle of existence was contracted, the more we clung to a state of pure and all self-dependent intellect, the greater our chance of happiness. Thus

you denied that we were rendered happier by our luxuries, by our ambition, or by our affections. Love and its ties were banished from your solitary Utopia; and you asserted that the true wisdom of life lay solely in the cultivation—not of our feelings, but our faculties. You know, I held a different doctrine : and it is with the natural triumph of a hostile partisan that I hear you are about to relinquish the practice of one of your dogmas ;—in consequence, may I hope, of having forsworn the theory?"

"Not so, my lord," answered Aram, colouring slightly; "my weakness only proves that my theory is difficult,—not that it is wrong. I still venture to think it true. More pain than pleasure is occasioned us by others—banish others, and you are

necessarily the gainer. Mental activity and moral quiescence are the two states which, were they perfected and united, would blend into happiness. It is such a union which constitutes all we imagine of heaven, or conceive of the majestic felicity of a God."

"Yet, while you are on earth you will be believe me! happier in the state you are about to choose," said the earl. "Who could look at that enchanting face (the speaker directed his eyes towards Madeline) and not feel that it gave a pledge of happiness that could not be broken?"

It was not in the nature of Aram to like any allusion to himself, and still less to his affections: he turned aside his head, and remained silent: the wary earl discovered his indiscretion immediately.

"But let us put aside individual cases," said he,—"the *meum* and the *tuum* forbid all general argument—and confess that there is for the majority of human beings a greater happiness in love than in the sublime state of passionless intellect to which you would so challengingly exalt us. Have not Cicero said wisely, that we ought no more to subject too slavishly our affections, than to elevate them too imperiously into our masters? *Neque se nimium erigere, nec subire servitute.*"

"Cicero loved philosophising better than philosophy," said Aram, coldly: "but surely my lord, the affections give us pain as well as pleasure? The doubt, the dread, the restlessness of love—surely these prevent the passion from constituting a happy state of mind? To me one knowledge alone seems sufficient to embitter all its enjoyments—the knowledge that the object beloved must die. What a perpetuity of fear that knowledge creates! The avalanche that may crush us depends upon a single breath!"

"Is not that too refined a senti-

ment? Custom surely blunts us to every chance, every danger, that may happen to us hourly. Were the avalanche over you for a day, I grant your state of torture: but had an avalanche rested over you for years, and not yet fallen, you would forget that it could ever fall; you would eat, sleep, and make love, as if it were not!"

"Ha! my lord, you say well—you say well," said Aram, with a marked change of countenance; and, quickening his pace, he joined Lester's side, and the thread of the previous conversation was broken off.

The earl afterwards, in walking through the garden (an excursion which he proposed himself, for he was somewhat of an horticulturist), took an opportunity to renew the subject.

"You will pardon me," said he "but I cannot convince myself that man would be happier were he without emotions; and that to enjoy life he should be solely dependent on himself."

"Yet it seems to me," said Aram, "a truth easy of proof. If we love, we place our happiness in others. The moment we place our happiness in others, comes uncertainty, but uncertainty is the bane of happiness. Children are the source of anxiety to their parents; his mistress to the lover. Change, accident, death, all menace us in each person whom we regard. Every new affection opens new channels by which grief can invade us; but, you will say, by which joy also can flow in—granted! but in human life is there not more grief than joy? What is it that renders the balance even? What makes the staple of our happiness,—endearing to us the life at which we should otherwise repine? It is the mere passive, yet stirring, consciousness of life itself—of the sun and the air,—of the physical being, but this consciousness every emotion disturbs

Yet could you add to its tranquillity an excitement that never exhausts itself,—that becomes refreshed, not sated, with every new possession, then you would obtain happiness. There is only one excitement of this divine order,—that of intellectual culture. Behold now my theory! Examine it—it contains no flaw. But if,” renewed Aram, after a pause, “a man is subject to fate solely in himself, not in others, he soon battles his mind against all fear, and prepares it for all events. A little philosophy enables him to bear bodily pain, or the common infirmities of flesh: by a philosophy somewhat deeper, he can conquer the ordinary reverses of fortune, the dread of shame, and the last calamity of death. But what philosophy could ever thoroughly console him for the ingratitude of a friend, the worthlessness of a child, the death of a mistress? Hence, only, when he stands alone, can a man’s soul say to Fate, ‘I defy thee.’”

“You think, then,” said the earl, reluctantly diverting the conversation into a new channel, “that in the pursuit of knowledge lies our only *active* road to *real* happiness. Yet here how eternal must be the disappointments even of the most successful! Does not Boyle tell us of a man who, after

devoting his whole life to the study of one mineral, confessed himself, at last, ignorant of all its properties?”

“Had the object of his study been himself, and not the mineral, he would not have been so unsuccessful a student,” said Aram, smiling. “Yet,” added he, in a graver tone, “we do indeed cleave the vast heaven of Truth with a weak and crippled wing: and often we are appalled in our way by a dread sense of the immensity around us, and of the inadequacy of our own strength. But there is a rapture in the breath of the pure and difficult air, and in the progress by which we compass earth, the while we draw nearer to the stars, that again exalts us beyond ourselves, and reconciles the true student unto all things, even to the hardest of them all,—the conviction how feebly our performance can ever imitate the grandeur of our ambition! As you see the spark fly upward,—sometimes not falling to earth till it be dark and quenched,—thus soars, whither it recks not, so that the direction be *above*, the luminous spirit of him who aspires to Truth; nor will it back to the vile and heavy clay from which it sprang, until the light which bore it upward be no more!”

CHAPTER IV.

A DEEPER EXAMINATION INTO THE STUDENT'S HEART.—THE VISIT TO THE CASTLE.—PHILOSOPHY PUT TO THE TRIAL.

"I weigh not Fortune's frown or smile,
 I joy not much in earthly joys,
 I seek not state, I seek not style,
 I am not fond of Fancy's toys;
 I rest so pleased with what I have,
 I wish no more, no more I crave."—JOSHUA SYLVESTER.

THE reader will pardon me if I somewhat clog his interest in my tale by the didactic character of brief conversations I have just given, and which I am compelled to renew. It is not only the history of his life, but the character and tone of Aram's mind, that I wish to stamp upon my page. Fortunately, however, the path my story assumes is of such a nature, that, in order to effect this object, I shall never have to desert, and scarcely again even to linger by, the way.

Every one knows the magnificent moral of Goethe's *Plaut*. Every one knows that sublime discontent—that chafing at the bounds of human knowledge—that yearning for the inaccessible Paradise beyond, which "the sworded angel" forbids us to approach—that daring, yet sorrowful state of mind—that sense of defeat, even in conquest, which Goethe has embodied—a picture of the loftiest grief of which the soul is capable, and which may remind us of the profound and august melancholy which the Great Sculptor breathed into the repose of the noblest of mythological heroes, when he represented the god resting after his labours, as if more conscious of their vanity than elated with their extent.

In this portrait, the grandeur of which the wild scenes that follow in

the drama we refer to, do not (strangely wonderful as they are) perhaps altogether sustain, Goethe has bequeathed to the gaze of a calmer and more practical posterity the burning and restless spirit—the feverish desire for knowledge more vague than useful, which characterised the exact epoch in the intellectual history of Germany in which the poem was inspired and produced.

At these bitter waters, the Marah of the streams of Wisdom, the soul of the man whom we have made the hero of these pages had also, and not lightly qualified. The properties of a mind, more calm and stern than belonged to the visionaries of the Harz and the Danube, might indeed have preserved him from that thirst for the Impossible, which gives so peculiar a romance, not only to the poetry, but the philosophy, of the German people. But if he rejected the superstitions, he did not also reject the bewilderments, of the mind. He loved to plunge into the dark and metaphysical subtleties which human genius has called daringly forth from the realities of things:—

* to spin
 A shroud of thought, to hide him from the sun
 Of this familiar life, which seems to be,
 But is not—*is* but queer mockery

Of all we would believe;—or sadly blame
The jarring and incompatible frame
Of this wrong world; and then anatomise
The purposes and thoughts of man, whose
eyes

Were closed in distant years; or widely
gaze

The issue of the earth's great business,
When we shall be, as we no longer are;—
Like babbling gossips, safe, who hear the war
Of winds, and sigh!—but tremble not!"

Much in him was a type, or rather forerunner, of the intellectual spirit that broke forth among our countrymen, when we were children, and is now slowly dying away amidst the loud events and absorbing struggles of the awakening world. But in one respect he stood aloof from all his tribe—in his hard indifference to worldly ambition and his contempt of fame. As some sages have considered the universe a dream, and self the only *reality*, so in his austere and collected reliance upon his own mind—the gathering in, as it were, of his resources, he appeared to regard the pomps of the world as shadows, and the life of his own spirit the only substance. He had built a city and a tower within the Shinar of his own heart, whence he might look forth, unscathed and unmoved, upon the deluge that broke over the rest of earth.

Only in one instance, and that, as we have seen, after much struggle, he had given way to the emotions that agitate his kind, and had surrendered himself to the dominion of another. This was against his theories—but what theories ever resist love? In yielding, however, thus far, he seemed more on his guard than ever against a broader encroachment. He had admitted one "fair spirit" for his "minister," but it was only with a deeper fervour to invoke "the desert" as "his dwelling-place." Thus, when the earl, who, like most practical judges of mankind, loved to apply to each individual the motives that

actuate the mass, and who only unwillingly, and somewhat sceptically, assented to the exceptions, and was driven to search for peculiar clues to the eccentric instance,—finding, to his secret triumph, that Aram had admitted one intruding emotion into his boasted circle of indifference, imagined that he should easily induce him (the spell once broken) to receive another, he was surprised and puzzled to discover himself in the wrong.

Lord * * * at that time had been lately called into the administration, and he was especially anxious to secure the support of all the talent that he could enlist on his behalf. The times were those in which party ran high, and in which individual political writings were honoured with an importance which the periodical press in general has now almost wholly monopolized. On the side opposed to government, writers of great name and high attainments had shone with peculiar effect, and the earl was naturally desirous that they should be opposed by an equal array of intellect on the side espoused by himself. The name alone of Eugene Aram, at a day when scholarship was renown, would have been no ordinary acquisition to the cause of the earl's party; but that judicious and penetrating nobleman perceived that Aram's abilities, his various research, his extended views, his facility of argument, and the heat and energy of his eloquence, might be rendered of an importance which could not have been anticipated from the name alone, however eminent, of a retired and sedentary scholar: he was not, therefore, without an interested motive in the attentions he now lavished upon the student, and in his curiosity to put to the proof the disdain of all worldly enterprise, and worldly temptation, which Aram affected. He could not but think, that, to a man poor and lowly of circumstance, conscious

of superior requirements, about to increase his wants by admitting to himself a partner, and arrived at that age when the calculations of interest and the whispers of ambition have usually most weight,—he could not but think that to such a man the enticing prospects of social advancement, the hope of the high fortunes, and the powerful and glittering influence which position, life, in England, offers to the aspirant, might be rendered altogether irresistible.

He took several opportunities, in the course of the next week, of renewing his conversation with Aram, and of gradually turning it into the channels which he thought most likely to produce the impression he desired to create. He was somewhat baffled, but by no means despondent, in his attempts; but he resolved to defer his ultimate proposition until it could be made to the fullest advantage. He had engaged the Leesters to promise to pass a day at the castle; and with great difficulty, and at the earnest intreaties of Madeline, Aram was prevailed upon to accompany them. So extreme was his distaste to general society, and, from some motive or another more powerful than mere constitutional reserve, so miserably had he for years refused all temptations to enter it, that natural as this mission was rendered by his astonishing marriage to one of the party, it lived upon him with a sort of terror and foreboding of evil. It was as if he were passing beyond the boundary of some law, on which the very tenure of his existence depended. After he had consented a trembling moment over him, he hastily left the room, and, till the day arrived, was observed by his friends of the manner-house to be more gloomy and abstracted than they ever had known him, even at the earliest period of acquaintance.

On the day itself, as they proceeded

to the castle, Madeline perceived, with a painful repentance of her interference, that he sat by her side cold and rapt; and that, once or twice, when his eyes dwelt upon her, it was with an expression of reproach and distrust.

It was not till they entered the lofty hall of the castle, when a vulgar diffidence would have been most abashed, that Aram recovered himself. The earl was standing—the centre of a group in the recess of a window in the saloon, opening upon an extensive and stately terrace. He came forward to receive them with the polished and warm kindness which he bestowed upon all his inferiors in rank. He complimented the sisters; he jested with Lester; but to Aram only he manifested less the courtesy of kindness than of respect. He took his arm, and, leaning on it with a light touch, led him to the group at the window. It was composed of the most distinguished public men in the country, and among them the earl himself was connected, through an illegitimate branch, with the reigning monarch) was a prince of the blood royal.

To those, whom he had prepared for the introduction, he severely, and with an easy grace, presented Aram, and then, falling back a few steps, he watched, with a keen but seemingly careless eye, the effect which so sudden a contact with royalty itself would produce on the mind of the shy and secluded student, whom it was his object to dazzle and overpower. It was at this moment that the native dignity of Aram, which his studies, unwearily as they were, had certainly tended to increase, displayed itself, in a trial which, poor as it was in abstract theory, was far from despicable in the eyes of the sensible and practical courtier. He reserved with his usual modesty, but not with his usual shrinking and embarrassment on such occasions, the compliments

he received; a certain and far from ungraceful pride was mingled with his simplicity of demeanour, no *fluttering* of manner betrayed that he was either dazzled or humbled by the presence in which he stood, and the earl could not but confess that there was never a more favourable opportunity for comparing the aristocracy of genius with that of birth; it was one of those homely every-day triumphs of intellect which please us more than they ought to do, for, after all, they are more common than the men of courts are willing to believe.

Lord * * * did not, however, long leave Aram to the support of his own unassisted presence of mind and calmness of nerve; he advanced, and led the conversation, with his usual tact, into a course which might at once please Aram, and afford him the opportunity to shine. The earl had imported from Italy some of the most beautiful specimens of classic sculpture which this country now possesses. These were disposed in niches around the magnificent apartment in which the guests were assembled, and as the earl pointed them out, and illustrated each from the beautiful anecdotes and golden allusions of antiquity, he felt that he was affording to Aram a gratification he could never have experienced before; and in the expression of which the grace and copiousness of his learning would find vent. Nor was he disappointed. The cheek, which till then had retained its steady paleness, now caught the glow of enthusiasm; and in a few moments there was not a person in the group who did not feel, and cheerfully feel, the superiority of the one who, in birth and fortune, was immeasurably the lowest of all.

The English aristocracy, whatever be the faults of their education, have at least the merit of being alive to the possession, and easily warmed to the possession, of classical attainments:

perhaps too much so; for they are thus apt to judge all talent by a classical standard, and all theory by classical experience. Without—save in very rare instances—the right to boast of any deep learning, they are far more susceptible than the nobility of any other nation to the *spiritum Camæne*. They are easily and willingly charmed back to the studies which, if not eagerly pursued in their youth, are still entwined with all their youth's brightest recollections; the schoolboy's prize, and the master's praise, the first ambition, and its first reward. A felicitous quotation, a delicate allusion, are never lost upon their ear; and the veneration which, at Eton, they bore to the best versemaker in the school, tinctures their judgment of others throughout life, mixing, I know not what, both of liking and esteem, with their admiration of one who uses his classical weapons with a scholar's dexterity, not a pedant's inaptitude: for such a one there is a sort of agreeable confusion in their respect; they are inclined, unconsciously, to believe that he must necessarily be a high gentleman—ay, and something of a good fellow into the bargain.

It happened, then, that Aram could not have dwelt upon a theme more likely to arrest the spontaneous interest of those with whom he now conversed—men themselves of more cultivated minds than usual, and more capable than most (from that acute perception of real talent, which is produced by habitual political warfare), of appreciating not only his endowments, but his facility in applying them.

"You are right, my lord," said Sir —, the whipper-in of the * * * party, taking the earl aside; "he would be an inestimable pamphleteer."

"Could you get him to write us a sketch of the state of parties; lumi

nous, eloquent!" whispered a lord of the household.

The earl answered by a *bon mot*, and turned to a bust of Cæcælia.

The hours at that time were (in the country at least) not late, and the earl was one of the first introducers of the polished fashion of France, by which he testified a preference of the society of the women to that of our own sex, so that, in leaving the dining-room, it was not so late but that the greater part of the guests walked out upon the terrace, and admired the expanse of country which it overlooked, and along which the thin veil of the twilight began now to heave.

Having safely deposited his royal guest at a whist table, and thus left himself a free agent, the earl, inviting Aram to join him, sauntered among the *lunettes* on the terrace for a few moments, and then descended a broad flight of steps which brought them into a more shaded and retired walk, on either side of which rows of orange-trees gave forth their fragrance, while, to the right, sudden and numerous voices were out amidst the more regular and dense foliage, adorning groups—now of some rustic statue—now of some lonely temple—now of some quaint fountain, on the play of whose waters the first stars had begun to tremble.

It was one of those magnificent gardens, modelled from the society gardens of Versailles, which it is soon too much to deary, but which breathe so unequivocally of the palace. I grant that they deck Nature with somewhat too profuse a grace; but is beauty always best seen in *dishevelled*? And will what associations of the brightest traditions connected with Nature they lack, but more frequent luxuriance? Must we breathe only the influence of Rome to be sensible of feeling the breast attracted to the fountain or the statue?

"I am glad," said the earl, "that

you admired my bust of Cicero—it is from an original very lately discovered. What grandeur in the brow!—what energy in the mouth and downward bend of the head! It is pleasant even to imagine we gaze upon the likeness of so bright a spirit:—and confess, at least of Cicero, that in reading the aspirations and outpourings of his mind, you have felt your apathy to fame melting away, you have shared the desire to live in the future age,—the longing after immortality!"

"Was it not that longing," replied Aram, "which gave to the character of Cicero its poorest and most frivolous infirmity? Has it not made him, glorious as he is despite of it, a byword in the mouth of every schoolboy? Whenever you mention his genius, do you not hear an appendix on his vanity?"

"Yet without that vanity, that desire for a name with posterity, would he have been equally great—would he equally have cultivated his genius?"

"Probably, my lord, he would not have equally cultivated his genius, but in reality he might have been equally great. A man often injures his mind by the means that increase his genius. You think this, my lord, a paradox; but examine it. How many men of genius have been but ordinary men, take them from the particular objects in which they shine! Why is this, but that in cultivating one branch of intellect they neglect the rest? Nay, the very torpor of the reasoning faculty has often kindled the imaginative. Lucretius is said to have composed his sublime poem under the influence of a delirium. The susceptibility that we create or receive by the pursuit of one object weakens our general reason; and I may compare with some justice the powers of the mind to the faculties of the body, in which exerting is wear-

sioned by an inequality of strength in the eyes, and discordance of voice by the same inequality in the ears."

"I believe you are right," said the earl; "yet I own I willingly forgive Cicero for his vanity, if it contributed to the production of his orations and his essays. And he is a greater man, even with his vanity unconquered, than if he had conquered his foible, al, in doing so, taken away the incitements to his genius."

"A greater man in the world's eye, my lord, but scarcely in reality. Had Homer written his *Iliad* and then burned it, would his genius have been less? The world would have known nothing of him; but would he have been a less extraordinary man on that account? We are too apt, my lord, to confound greatness and fame."

"There is one circumstance," added Aram, after a pause, "that should diminish our respect for renown. Errors of life, as well as foibles of character, are often the real enhancers of celebrity. Without his errors, I doubt whether *Henri Quatre* would have become the idol of a people. How many Whartons has the world known, who, deprived of their frailties, had been inglorious! The light that you so admire, reaches you only through the distance of time, on account of the angles and unevenness of the body whence it emanates. Were the surface of the moon smooth it would be invisible."

"I admire your illustrations," said the earl; "but I reluctantly submit to your reasonings. You would then neglect your powers, lest they should lead you into errors!"

"Pardon me, my lord; it is because I think *all* the powers should be cultivated, that I quarrel with the exclusive cultivation of one. And it is only because I would strengthen the whole mind that I dissent from the reasonings of those who tell you to consult your genius."

"But your genius may serve mankind more than this general cultivation of intellect!"

"My lord," replied Aram, with a mournful cloud upon his countenance, "that argument may have weight with those who think mankind *can* be effectually served, though they may be often dazzled, by the labours of an individual. But, indeed, this perpetual talk of 'mankind' signifies nothing: each of us consults his proper happiness, and we consider him a madman who ruins his own peace of mind by an everlasting fretfulness of philanthropy."

This was a doctrine that half pleased, half displeased the earl: it shadowed forth the most dangerous notions which Aram entertained.

"Well, well," said the noble host, as, after a short contest on the ground of his guest's last remark, they left off where they began, "let us drop these general discussions. I have a particular proposition to unfold. We have, I trust, Mr Aram, seen enough of each other to feel that we can lay a sure foundation for mutual esteem. For my part, I own frankly, that I have never met with one who has inspired me with a sincerer admiration. I am desirous that your talents and great learning should be known in the widest sphere. You may despise fame, but you must permit your friends the weakness to wish *you* justice, and themselves triumph. You know my post in the present administration: the place of my secretary is one of great trust—some influence, and fair emolument. I offer it to you—accept it, and you will confer upon me an honour and an obligation. You will have your own separate house; or apartments in mine, solely appropriated to your use. Your privacy will never be disturbed. Every arrangement shall be made for yourself and your bride, that either of you can suggest. Leisure for your own pursuits

you will have too in abundance—there are others who will perform all that is necessary in the more details of your others. In London you will be around you the most eminent living men of all nations, and in all pursuits. If you contract (which believe me is possible—it is a tempting game!) any inclination towards public life, you will have the most brilliant opportunities afforded you, and I forecast you the most signal success. Stay yet, my friend—for this you will owe me no thanks. Were I not sensible that I consult my own interests in the proposal, I should be courtier enough to suppress it."

"My lord," said Aram, in a voice which, in spite of its calmness, betrayed that he was affected, "it seldom happens to a man of my secluded habits and lonely pursuits, to have the philosophy he affects put to so severe a trial. I am grateful to you—deeply grateful for an offer so munificent—so undeserved. I am yet more grateful that it allows me to stand the strength of my own heart, and to find that I did not too highly rate it. Look, my lord, from the spot where we now stand" (the moon had risen and they had now returned to the terrace): "in the vale below, and far among those trees, lies my home. More than two years ago I came thence to fix the resting place of a sad and troubled spirit. There have I centred all my wishes and my hopes; and there may I breathe my last! My lord, you will not think me ungrateful that my choice is made; and you will not blame my motive, though you may despise my wisdom."

"But," said the earl, astonished, "you cannot foresee all the advantages you would renounce! At your age—with your intellect—to choose the lonely seclusion of a hermitage—it was wiser to renounce yourself to it, but it is not wise to prefer it! Say, say, consider—pause. I am in no haste for your

decision; and what advantages have you in your retreat, that you will not possess in a greater degree with me? Quiet?—I pledge it to you under my roof. Solitude?—you shall have it at your will. Books?—what are those which you, which any individual may possess, to the public institutions, the magnificent collections, of the metropolis? What else is it you enjoy yonder, and cannot enjoy with me?"

"Liberty!" said Aram, energetically.—"Liberty! the wild sense of independence. Could I exchange the lonely stars and the free air, for the poor lights and feverish atmosphere of worldly life! Could I surrender my mood, with its thousand eccentricities and humours—its cloud and shadow—to the eyes of strangers, or veil it from their gaze by the irksomeness of an eternal hypocrisy! No, my lord! I am too old to turn disciple to the world! You promise me solitude and quiet. What charm would they have for me, if I felt they were held from the generosity of another! The attraction of solitude is only in its independence. You offer me the circle, but not the magic which made it holy. Books! *They*, years since, would have tempted me; but those whose wisdom I have already drained, have taught me now almost enough; and the two books, whose interest can never be exhausted—Nature and my own heart—will suffice for the rest of life. My lord, I require no time for consideration."

"And you positively refuse me!"

"Gratefully refuse you."

The earl positively walked away for one moment; but it was not in his nature to lose himself for more.

"Mr. Aram," said he, frankly, and holding out his hand, "you have chosen nobly, if not wisely; and though I cannot forgive you for depriving me of such a companion, I thank you for teaching me such a lesson. Henceforth I will believe

that philosophy may exist in practice, and that a contempt for wealth and for honours is not the mere profession of discontent. This is the first time, in a various and experienced life, that I have found a man sincerely deaf to the temptations of the world,—and that man of such endowments! If ever you see cause to alter a theory that I still think erroneous, though lofty—remember me; and at all times, and on all occasions,” he added, with a smile, “when a friend becomes a necessary evil, call to mind our star-light walk on the castle terrace.”

Aram did not mention to Lester, or

even Madeline, the above conversation. The whole of the next day he shut himself up at home; and when he again appeared at the manor house he heard, with evident satisfaction, that the earl had been suddenly summoned on state affairs to London.

There was an unaccountable soreness in Aram's mind, which made him feel a resentment—a suspicion against all who sought to lure him from his retreat. “Thank Heaven!” thought he, when he heard of the earl's departure; “we shall not meet for another year!” He was mistaken.—*Another year!*

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THE STORY RETURNS TO WALTER AND THE CORPORAL.—THE RENCONTRE WITH A STRANGER, AND HOW THE STRANGER PROVES TO BE NOT ALTOGETHER A STRANGER.

“Being got out of town in the road to Penafior, master of my own action, and forty good ducats, the first thing I did was to give my mule her head, and to go at what pace she pleased.

“I left them in the inn, and continued my journey; I was hardly got half a mile farther, when I met a cavalier very genteel,” &c.—*Old Blas.*

It was broad and sunny noon on the second day of their journey, as Walter Lester, and the valorous attendant with whom it had pleased Fate to endow him, rode slowly into a small town in which the corporal, in his own heart, had resolved to bait his Roman-nosed horse and refresh himself. Two comely inns had the younger traveller of the two already passed with an indifferent air, as if neither bait nor refreshment made any part of the necessary concerns of this habitable world. And in passing each of the said hostleries, the Roman-nosed horse had uttered a snort of indignant surprise, and the worthy corporal had responded to the quadrupedal remonstrance by a loud hem.

It seemed, however, that Walter heard neither of the above significant admonitions; and now the town was nearly passed, and a steep hill, that seemed winding away into eternity, already presented itself to the rueful gaze of the corporal.

“The boy's clean mad,” grunted Bunting to himself—“must do my duty to him—give him a hint.”

Pursuant to this notable and conscientious determination, Bunting jogged his horse into a trot, and coming alongside of Walter, put his hand to his hat and said,

“Weather warm, your honour—horses knocked up—next town far as hell!—halt a bit here—ugh!”

“Ha! that is very true, Bunting.

I had quite forgotten the length of our journey. But see, there is a sign-post yonder, we will take advantage of it."

"Augh! and your honour's right—fit for the forty-second," said the corporal, falling back; and in a few moments he and his charger found themselves, to their mutual delight, entering the ward of a small, but comfortable looking inn.

The host a man of a capacious stomach and a rosy cheek—in short, a host whom your heart warms to see, stepped forth immediately, held the stirrup for the young squire (for the corporal's movements were too stately to be rapid), and ushered him with a bow, a smile, and a flourish of his napkin, into one of those little quaint rooms, with cupboards bright with high glasses and old china, that it pleases us still to find extant in the old-fashioned inns, in our remoter roads and less Londonised districts.

His host was an honest fellow, and not above his profession; he stirred the fire, dusted the table, brought the bill of fare, and a newspaper seven days old, and then bustled away to order the dinner, and chat with the corporal. That accomplished here had already thrown the stables into commotion and frightening the two ostlers from their attendance on the steeds of more peaceable men, had set them both at leading his own horse and his master's to and fro the yard, to be cooled into comfort and appetite.

He was now busy in the kitchen, where he had seized the reins of government, sent the scullion to see if the hens had laid any fresh eggs, and drawn upon himself the oburgations of a very thin cook with a squint.

"Tell you, ma'am, you are wrong—quite wrong—seen the world—old enough—and know how to fry eggs better than any she in the three

kingdoms—hold jaw—mind your own business—where's the frying pan?—baugh!"

So completely did the corporal feel himself in his element, where he was putting everybody else out of the way; and so comfortable did he find his new quarters, that he resolved that the "bait" should be at all events prolonged until his good cheer had been deliberately digested, and his customary pipe duly enjoyed.

Accordingly, but not till Walter had dined, for our man of the world knew that it is the tendency of that meal to abate our activity, while it increases our good-humour, the corporal presented himself to his master, with a grave countenance.

"Greatly vexed, your honour—who'd have thought it?—But those large animals are bad on long marches."

"Why what's the matter now, Bunting?"

"Only, sir, that the brown horse is so done up, that I think it would be as much as life's worth to go any farther for several hours."

"Very well; and if I propose staying here till the evening!—We have ridden far, and are in no great hurry."

"To be sure not—sure and certain not," cried the corporal. "Ah, master, you know how to command, I see. Nothing like discretion—discretion, sir, is a jewel. Sir, it is more than a jewel—it's a pair of stirrups!"

"A what, Bunting?"

"Pair of stirrups, your honour. Stirrups help us to get on, so does discretion; to get off, ditto discretion. Men without stirrups look fine, ride bold, fire men—men without discretion cut duck, but knock up all of a crack. Stirrups—but what signifies? Could say much more, your honour, but don't lose chatter."

"Your words is true enough, if not posited," said Walter—but it does not hold good to the last. When

a man falls, his discretion should preserve him; but he is often dragged in the mud by his stirrups."

"Beg pardon—you're wrong," quoth the corporal, nothing taken by surprise; "spoke of the new fangled stirrups that open, crank, when we fall, and let us out of the scrape." *

Satisfied with this repartee, the corporal now (like an experienced jester) withdrew to leave its full effect on the admiration of his master. A little before sunset the two travellers renewed their journey.

"I have loaded the pistols, sir," said the corporal, pointing to the holsters on Walter's saddle. "It is eighteen miles off to the next town—will be dark long before we get there."

"You did very right, Bunting, though I suppose there is not much danger to be apprehended from the gentlemen of the highway."

"Why the landlors do say the reverse, your honour,—been many robberies lately in these here parts."

"Well, we are fairly mounted, and you are a formidable-looking fellow, Bunting."

"Oh! your honour," quoth the corporal, turning his head stiffly away, with a modest simper, "you makes me blush; though, indeed, bating that I have the military air, and am more in the prime of life, your honour is well nigh as awkward a gentleman as myself to come across."

"Much obliged for the compliment!" said Walter, pushing his horse a little forward: the corporal took the hint and fell back.

It was now that beautiful hour of twilight when lovers grow especially tender. The young traveller every instant threw his dark eyes upward, and thought—not of Madeline, but

her sister. The corporal himself grew pensive, and in a few moments his whole soul was absorbed in contemplating the forlorn state of the abandoned Jacobina.

In this melancholy and silent mood, they proceeded onward till the shades began to deepen; and by the light of the first stars Walter beheld a small, spare gentleman riding before him on an ambling nag, with cropped ears and mane. The rider, as he now came up to him, seemed to have passed the grand climacteric, but looked hale and vigorous; and there was a certain air of stand and sober aristocracy about him, which involuntarily begat your respect.

He looked hard at Walter as the latter approached, and still more hard at the corporal. He seemed satisfied with the survey.

"Sir," said he, slightly touching his hat to Walter, and with an agreeable though rather sharp intonation of voice, "I am very glad to see a gentleman of your appearance travelling my road. Might I request the honour of being allowed to join you so far as you go? To say the truth, I am a little afraid of encountering those industrious gentlemen who have been lately somewhat notorious in these parts; and it may be better for all of us to ride in as strong a party as possible."

"Sir," replied Walter, eyeing in his turn the speaker, and in his turn also feeling satisfied with the scrutiny. "I am going to * * * *, where I shall pass the night on my way to town, and shall be very happy in your company."

The corporal uttered a loud hem; that penetrating man of the world was not too well pleased with the advances of a stranger.

"What fools them boys be!" thought he, very discontentedly. "Howsoever, the man does seem like a decent country gentleman, and we are two

* Of course the corporal does not speak of the patent stirrup: that would be an anachronism.

to one: besides, he's old, little, and—
rough, bough—I dare say we are safe
enough, for all that *he* can do."

The stranger possessed a polished
and wellbred demeanour: he talked
freely and expansively, and his con-
versation was that of a shrewd and
educated man. He informed Walter,
that not only the roads had been
infested by those more daring riders
common at that day, and to whose
merits we ourselves have endeavoured
to do justice in a former work of
blessed memory, but that several
houses had been lately attempted,
and two absolutely plundered.

"For myself," he added, "I have no
money to signify, about my person:
my watch is only valuable to me for
the time it has been in my possession;
and if the rogues robbed one civilly,
I should not so much mind encounter-
ing them; but they are a desperate
set, and use violence when there is
nothing to be got by it. Have you
travelled far to-day, sir?"

"Some six or seven-and-twenty
miles," replied Walter. "I am pro-
ceeding to London, and not willing to
distress my horses by too rapid a
journey."

"Very right, very good: and horses,
sir, are not now what they used to be
when I was a young man. Ah, what
wagers I used to win then! Horses
galloped, sir, when I was twenty; they
trotted when I was thirty-five; but
they only amble now. Sir, if it does
not tax your patience too severely, let
us give our nags some hay and water
at the half-way house yonder."

Walter assented, they stopped at a
little solitary inn by the side of the
road, and the host came out with great
alacrity when he heard the
voice of Walter's companion.

"Ah, Sir Peter!" said he, "and
how best your honour!—fine night,
Sir Peter—hope you'll get home safe,
Sir Peter."

"Safe—ay! indeed, Jock. I hope

so too. Has all been quiet here this
last night or two?"

"Whish, sir!" whispered my host,
jerkng his thumb back towards the
house; "there be two ugly customers
within I does not know: they have
got famous good horses, and are
drinking hard. I can't say as I knows
anything agen 'em, but I think your
honours had better be jogging."

"Aha! thank ye, Jock, thank ye.
Never mind the hay now," said Sir
Peter, pulling away the reluctant
mouth of his nag; and turning to
Walter, "Come sir, let us move on.
Why, sounds! where is that servant
of yours?"

Walter now perceived, with great
vexation, that the corporal had dis-
appeared within the alehouse; and
looking through the casement, on
which the ruddy light of the fire
played cheerily, he saw the man of
the world lifting a little measure of
"the pure creature" to his lips; and
close by the hearth, at a small, round
table, covered with glasses, pipes, &c.,
he beheld two men eyeing the tall
corporal very wistfully, and of no
prepossessing appearance themselves.
One, indeed, as the fire played full
on his countenance, was a person of
singularly rugged and sinister features;
and this man, he now remarked, was
addressing himself with a grim smile
to the corporal, who, setting down his
little "noggin," regarded him with a
stare, which appeared to Walter to
denote recognition. This survey was
the operation of a moment: for Sir
Peter took it upon himself to despatch
the landlord into the house, to order
forth the unseasonable carouser, and
presently the corporal stalked out,
and having solemnly remounted, the
whole trio set onward in a brisk trot.
As soon as they were without sight of
the alehouse, the corporal brought the
squadron profile of his gaunt steed on
a level with his master's horse.

"Augh, sir!" said he, with more

than his usual energy of utterance, "I see'd him!"

"Him! whom?"

"Man with ugly face what drank at Peter Dealtry's, and went to Master Aram's,—knew him in a crack,—sure to be a Tartar!"

"What! does your servant recognise one of those suspicious fellows whom Jock warned us against?" cried Sir Peter, pricking up his ears.

"So it seems, sir," said Walter: "he saw him once before, many miles hence; but I fancy he knows nothing really to his prejudice."

"Augh!" cried the corporal; "he's d—d ugly, any how!"

"That's a tall fellow of yours," said Sir Peter, jerking up his chin with that peculiar motion common to the brief in stature, when they are covetous of elongation. "He looks military: has he been in the army? Ay, I thought so; one of the King of Prussia's grenadiers, I suppose? Faith, I hear hoofs behind!"

"Hem!" cried the corporal, again coming alongside of his master. "Beg pardon, sir—served in the forty-second—nothing like regular line—stragglers always cut off;—had rather not straggle just now—enemy behind!"

Walter looked back and saw two men approaching them at a hand-gallop. "We are a match at least for them, sir," said he, to his new acquaintance.

"I am devilish glad I met you," was Sir Peter's rather selfish reply.

"Tis he! 'tis the devil!" grunted the corporal, as the two men now gained their side and pulled up; and Walter recognised the faces he had remarked in the ale-house.

"Your servant, gentlemen," quoth the uglier of the two; "you ride fast —"

"And ready:—bother—baugh!" chimed in the corporal, plucking a gigantic pistol from his holster, without any further ceremony.

"Glad to hear it, sir!" said the hard-featured stranger, nothing dashed, "But I can tell *you* a secret!"

"What's that—*augh!*" said the corporal, cocking his pistol.

"Whoever hurts you, friend, cheats the gallows!" replied the stranger, laughing, and spurring on his horse, to be out of reach of any practical answer with which the corporal might favour him. But Bunting was a prudent man, and not apt to be choleric.

"Bother!" said he, and dropped his pistol, as the other stranger followed his ill favoured comrade.

"You see we are too strong for them!" cried Sir Peter, gaily; "evidently highwaymen! How very fortunate that I should have fallen in with you!"

A shower of rain now began to fall. Sir Peter looked serious—he halted abruptly—unbuckled his cloak, which had been strapped before his saddle—wrapped himself up in it—buried his face in the collar—muffled his chin with a red handkerchief, which he took out of his pocket, and then turning to Walter, he said to him, "What! no cloak, sir! no wrapper even? Upon my soul I am very sorry I have not another handkerchief to lend you!"

"Man of the world—baugh!" grunted the corporal, and his heart quite warmed to the stranger he had at first taken for a robber.

"And now, sir," said Sir Peter, patting his nag, and pulling up his cloak collar still higher, "let us go gently, there is no occasion for hurry. Why distress our horses?"

"Really, sir," said Walter, smiling, "though I have a great regard for my horse, I have some for myself; and I should rather like to be out of this rain as soon as possible."

"Oh, ah! you have no cloak. I forgot that! to be sure—to be sure, let us trot on, gently—though—

gently. Well, sir, as I was saying, horses are not so swift as they were. The horse is brought up by the French! I remember once, Johnny Courtland and I, after dining at my house till the champagne had played the dancing-master to our brains, mounted our horses, and rode twenty miles for a week to reward the winner. I lost it, sir, by a hair's breadth; but I lost it on purpose; it would have half ruined Johnny Courtland to have paid me, and he had that delicacy, sir,—he had that delicacy, that he would not have suffered me to refuse taking his money,—so what could I do, but lose on purpose? You see I had no alternative!”

“Pray, sir,” said Walter, charmed and astonished at so rare an instance of the generosity of human friendship,—pray, sir, did I not hear you address Sir Peter by the familiar of the attorney? Can it be, since you speak so familiarly of Mr Courtland, that I have the honour to address Sir Peter Hales?”

“Indeed *that* is my name,” replied the gentleman, with some surprise in his voice. “But I have never had the honour of seeing you before.”

“Perhaps my name is not unfamiliar to you,” said Walter. “And among my papers I have a letter addressed to you from my uncle, Rowland Lester.”

“Good bless me!” cried Sir Peter.

“What? Row?—well, indeed I am surprised to hear of him. So you are his nephew? Pray tell me all about him—a wild, gay, rollicking fellow, is he? Always fencing, sa—sa! or picking at bellards, or had in a scuffle there: there was not a jollier, better humoured fellow in the world than Row Lester.”

“You forget, Sir Peter,” said Walter, laughing at a description so unlike his sober and steady uncle, “that some years have passed since the time you speak of.”

“Ah, and so there have,” replied Sir Peter. “And what does your uncle say of me?”

“That when he knew you, you were all generosity, frankness, hospitality.”

“Humph, humph!” said Sir Peter, looking extremely disconcerted, a confusion which Walter imparted solely to modesty. “I was a hairbrained, foolish fellow then—quite a boy, quite a boy! but bless me, it rains sharply, and you have no cloak. But we are close on the town now. An excellent inn is the ‘Duke of Cumberland’s Head;’ you will have charming accommodation there.”

“What, Sir Peter, you know this part of the country well?”

“Pretty well, pretty well; indeed I live near, that is to say not *very* far from the town. This turn, if you please. We separate here. I have brought you a little out of your way—not above a mile or two—for fear the robbers should attack me if I was left alone. I had quite forgot you had no cloak. That’s your road—this mine. Ah! so Rowy Lester is still alive and hearty!—the same excellent wild fellow, no doubt. Give my kindest remembrance to him when you write. Adieu, sir.”

This latter speech having been delivered during a halt, the corporal had heard it: he grinned delightedly as he touched his hat to Sir Peter, who now trotted off, and muttered to his young master,—

“Most sensible man, that, sir!”

CHAPTER VI.

SIR PETER DISPLAYED.—ONE MAN OF THE WORLD SUFFERS FROM ANOTHER.—THE INCIDENT OF THE BRIDLE BEGETS THE INCIDENT OF THE SADDLE ;—THE INCIDENT OF THE SADDLE BEGETS THE INCIDENT OF THE WHIP ;—THE INCIDENT OF THE WHIP BEGETS WHAT THE READER MUST READ TO SEE.

" Nihil est aliud magnum quam multa minuta." *—*Vet. Auct.*

" AND so," said Walter, the next morning to the head waiter, who was busied about their preparations for breakfast ; "and so Sir Peter Hales, you say, lives within a mile of the town?"

" Scarcely a mile, sir,—black or green?—you passed the turn to his house last night ;—sir, the eggs are quite fresh this morning. This inn belongs to Sir Peter."

" Oh!—Does Sir Peter see much company?"

The waiter smiled.

" Sir Peter gives very handsome dinners, sir ; twice a-year! A most clever gentleman, Sir Peter! They say he is the best manager of property in the whole county. Do you like Yorkshire cake!—toast! yes, sir!"

" So, so," said Walter to himself, "a pretty true description my uncle gave me of this gentleman. 'Ask me too often to dinner, indeed!'—'offer me money if I want it!'—'spend a month at his house!'—'most hospitable fellow in the world!'—My uncle must have been dreaming."

Walter had yet to learn, that the men most prodigal when they have nothing but expectations, are often most thrifty when they know the charms of absolute possession. Be-

sides, Sir Peter had married a Scotch lady, and was blessed with eleven children! But was Sir Peter Hales much altered! Sir Peter Hales was exactly the same man in reality that he always had been. Once he was selfish in extravagance; he was now selfish in thrift. He had always pleased himself, and forgot other people; that was exactly what he valued himself on doing now. But the most absurd thing about Sir Peter was, that while he was for ever extracting use from every one else, he was mightily afraid of being himself put to use. He was in parliament, and noted for never giving a frank out of his own family. Yet withal, Sir Peter Hales was still an agreeable fellow; nay, he was more liked and much more esteemed than ever. There is something conciliatory in a saving disposition; but people put themselves in a great passion when a man is too liberal with his own. It is an insult on their own prudence. "What right has he to be so extravagant! What an example to our servants!" But your close neighbour does not humble you. You love your close neighbour; you respect your close neighbour; you have your harmless jest against him—but he is a most respectable man.

"A letter, sir, and a parcel, from Sir Peter Hales," said the waiter, entering.

* Nor is there anything that hath so great a power as the aggregate of small things.

The parcel was a bulky, angular, awkward packet of brown paper, wound once and tied with the smallest possible quantity of string; it was addressed to Mr. James Holwell, Saddler, — Street, * * * *. The letter was to ——— Lester, Esq., and ran thus, written in a very neat, stiff, Italian character:—

"D—S—

"I trust you had no difficulty in finding y^e Duke of Cumberland's Head; it is an excellent I^o.

"I greatly regret y^e you are unavoidably obliged to go on to Londⁿ; for, otherwise I sh^d have had the sincerest pleas^{ur} in seeing you here at din^r, & introducing you to L^d Hales. Another time I trust we may be more fortunate.

"As you pass thro' y^e litt^l town of, exactly 21 miles hence, on the road to Londⁿ, will you do me the fav^r to allow your serv^t to put the little parcel I send, into his pocket, & drop it as direct^l. It is a little I am forced to return. Country work^{ers} are such bung^{lers}."

"I sh^d most certain^l have had y^e han^d to wait on your person^l, but the rain has given me a m^o sev^{er} cold;—hope you have escap'd, tho' by y^e by, you had no shak^e, nor wrapp^l!"

"My kindest regards to your m^o excellent sto^o. I am quite sure he's the same fine merr^y fell^o he always was—take him so!"

"Y^r S^t. Yours faith^l

"PETER CRIMBLESCRAW HALEY.

"P.S. You know perh^{aps} y^e poor Jn^o Glast^{on}, your uncle's m^o intim^{ate} friend, lives in, the town in which your serv^t will drop y^e brid^{le}. He is much older d^d,—poor Jn^o!"

"Altered! alteration then seems the fashion with my uncle's friends!" thought Walter, as he rang for the servant, and assigned to L^d a charge of the snugly parcel.

"It is to be carried twenty-one miles at the request of the gentleman

we met last night,—a most sensible man, Bunting!"

"Augh—waugh,—your honour!" grunted the corporal, thrusting the bridle very discontentedly into his pocket, where it annoyed him the whole journey, by incessantly getting between his seat of leather and his seat of honour. It is a comfort to the inexperienced, when one man of the world smarts from the sagacity of another; we resign ourselves more willingly to our fate. Our travellers resumed their journey, and in a few minutes, from the cause we have before assigned, the corporal became thoroughly out of humour.

"Pray, Bunting," said Walter, calling his attendant to his side, do you feel sure that the man we met yesterday at the alehouse, is the same you saw at Graesdale some months ago?"

"D—n it!" cried the corporal quickly, and clapping his hand behind.

"How, sir?"

"Beg pardon, your honour—slip tongue, but this confounded parcel!—augh—bother."

"Why don't you carry it in your hand?"

"Tis so ungainesome, and be d—d to it! And how can I hold parcel and pull in this beast, which requires two hands: his mouth's as hard as a brickbat,—augh!"

"You have not answered my question yet!"

"Beg pardon, your honour. Yes, certain sure the man's the same; this not to be mistaken."

"It is strange," said Walter, musing, "that Aram should know a man, who, if not a highwayman as we suspected, is at least of rugged manner and disreputable appearance; it is strange, too, that Aram always avoided recurring to the acquaintance, though he confessed it." With this he broke into a trot, and the corporal into an oath.

They arrived by noon at the little town specified by Sir Peter and in

their way to the inn (for Walter resolved to rest there, passed by the saddler's house). It so chanced that Master Holwell was an adept in his craft, and that a newly invented hunting saddle at the window caught Walter's notice. The artful saddler persuaded the young traveller to dismount and look at "the most convenientest and handsomest saddle that ever was seen;" and the corporal having lost no time in getting rid of his incumbrance, Walter dismissed him to the inn with the horses, and after purchasing the saddle in exchange for his own, he sauntered into the shop to look at a new snaffle. A gentleman's servant was in the shop at the time, bargaining for a riding-whip; and the shopboy, among others, showed him a large old-fashioned one, with a tarnished silver handle. Grooms have no taste for antiquity, and in spite of the silver handle, the servant pushed it aside with some contempt. Some jest he uttered at the time chanced to attract Walter's notice to the whip; he took it up carelessly, and perceived with great surprise, that it bore his own crest, a bittern, on the handle. He examined it now with attention, and underneath the crest were the letters G. L., his father's initials.

"How long have you had this whip?" said he to the saddler, concealing the emotion which this token of his lost parent naturally excited.

"Oh, a nation long time, sir," replied Mr. Holwell. "It is a queer old thing, but really is not amiss, if the silver was scrubbed up a bit, and a new lash put on; you may have it a bargain, sir, if so be you have taken a fancy to it."

"Can you at all recollect how you came by it?" said Walter, earnestly. "The fact is, that I see by the crest and initials that it belonged to a person whom I have some interest in discovering."

"Why, let me think," said the saddler, scratching the tip of his right ear; "'tis so long ago sin I had it, I quite forget how I came by it."

"Oh, is it that whip, John?" said the wife, who had been attracted from the back parlour by the sight of the handsome young stranger. "Don't you remember, it's a many year ago, a gentleman who passed a day with Squire Courtland, when he first came to settle here, called and left the whip to have a new thong put to it? But I fancies he forgot it, sir, turning to Walter, for he never called for it again; and the squire's people said as how he was agone into Yorkshire: so there the whip's been ever sin. I remembers it, sir, 'cause I kept it in the little parlour nearly a year to be in the way like."

"Ah! I think I do remember it now," said Master Holwell. "I should think it's a matter of twelve yearn ago. I suppose I may sell it without fear of the gentleman's claiming it again."

"Not more than twelve years!" said Walter, anxiously, for it was some seventeen years since his father had been last heard of by his family.

"Why it may be thirteen, sir, or so, more or less; I can't say exactly."

"More likely fourteen!" said the dame; "it can't be much more, sir, we have only been a married fifteen year come next Christmas! But my old man here is ten years older nor I."

"And the gentleman, you say, was at Mr. Courtland's?"

"Yes, sir, that I'm sure of," replied the intelligent Mrs. Holwell: "they said he had come lately from Ince."

Walter now despairing of hearing more, purchased the whip; and blessing the worldly wisdom of Sir Peter Hales, that had thus thrown him on a clue, which, however slight, he resolved to follow up, he inquired the way to Squire Courtland's, and proceeded thither at once.

CHAPTER VII.

WALTER VISITS ANOTHER OF HIS UNCLE'S FRIENDS.—MR. COURTLAND'S STRANGE COMPLAINT.—WALTER LEARNS NEWS OF HIS FATHER, WHICH SURPRISES HIM.—THE CHANGE IN HIS DESTINATION.

"God's my life, did you ever hear the like, what a strange man is this !
What you have possessed me withal, I'll discharge it amply."

BEN JONSON : Every Man in his Humour.

MR. COURTLAND'S house was surrounded by a high wall, and stood at the outskirts of the town. A little wooden door, buried deep within the wall, seemed the only entrance. At this Walter paused, and after twice applying to the bell, a footman of a peculiarly grave and sanctimonious appearance opened the door.

In reply to Walter's inquiries, he informed him that Mr. Courtland was very unwell, and never saw "company." Walter, however, producing from his pocket-book the introductory letter given him by his uncle, slipped it into the servant's hand, accompanied by half a crown, and begged to be announced as a gentleman on very particular business.

"Well, sir, you can step in," said the servant, giving way; "but my master is very poorly—very poorly indeed."

"Indeed, I am sorry to hear it. Has he been long so?"

"Going on for ten ——— years, sir!" replied the servant, with great gravity, and opening the door of the house which stood within a few paces of the wall, on a singularly flat and bare grassplot, he showed him into a room, and left him alone.

The first thing that struck Walter in this apartment was its remarkable darkness. Though not large, it had no less than seven windows. Two sides of the wall seemed indeed all

window! Nor were these admittants of the celestial beam shaded by any blind or curtain;—

"The gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day."

made itself thoroughly at home in this airy chamber. Nevertheless, though so light, it seemed to Walter anything but cheerful. The sun had blistered and discoloured the painting of the wainscot, originally of a pale sea-green; there was little furniture in the apartment: one table in the centre, some half-a-dozen chairs, and a very small Turkey carpet, which did not cover one tenth part of the clean, smooth oak boards, constituted all the goods and chattels visible in the room. But what particularly added effect to the bareness of all within, was the singular and laborious bareness of all without. From each of these seven windows, nothing but a forlorn green flat of some extent was to be seen; there was neither tree, nor shrub, nor flower, in the whole expanse, although by several stamps of trees near the house, Walter perceived that the place had not always been so destitute of vegetable life.

While he was yet looking upon this singular baldness of scene, the servant reentered with his master's compliments, and a message that he should be happy to see any relation of Mr. Lester.

Walter accordingly followed the

footman into an apartment possessing exactly the same peculiarities as the former one, viz. a most disproportionate plurality of windows, a commodious scantiness of furniture, and a prospect without, that seemed as if the house had been built in the middle of Salisbury Plain.

Mr. Courtland himself, a stout man, still preserving the rosy hues and comely features, though certainly not the hilarious expression, which Lester had attributed to him, sat in a large chair, close by the centre window, which was open. He rose and shook Walter by the hand with great cordiality.

"Sir, I am delighted to see you! How is your worthy uncle? I only wish he were with you—you dine with me, of course. Thomas, tell the cook to add a tongue and chicken to the roast beef—no,—young gentleman, I will have no excuse: sit down, sit down; pray come near the window; do you not find it dreadfully close? not a breath of air! This house is so choked up; don't you find it so, eh? Ah, I see, you can scarcely gasp."

"My dear sir, you are mistaken: I am rather cold, on the contrary: nor did I ever in my life see a more airy house than yours."

"I try to make it so, sir, but I can't succeed; if you had seen what it was when I first bought it! A garden here, sir; a copse there; a wilderness, God wot! at the back; and a row of chesnut trees in the front! You may conceive the consequence, sir; I had not been long here, not two years, before my health was gone, sir, gone—the d—d vegetable life sucked it out of me. The trees kept away all the air; I was nearly suffocated without, at first, guessing the cause. But at length, though not till I had been withering away for five years, I discovered the origin of my malady. I went to work, sir; I plucked up the cursed garden, I cut

down the infernal chesnuts, I made a bowling-green of the diabolical wilderness, but I fear it is too late. I am dying by inches, have been dying ever since. The malaria has effectually tainted my constitution."

Here Mr. Courtland heaved a deep sigh, and shook his head with a most gloomy expression of countenance.

"Indeed, sir," said Walter, "I should not, to look at you, imagine that you suffered under any complaint. You seem still the same picture of health that my uncle describes you to have been when you knew him so many years ago."

"Yes, sir, yes; the confounded malaria fixed the colour to my cheeks: the blood is stagnant, sir. Would to Heaven I could see myself a shade paler!—the blood does not flow; I am like a pool in a citizen's garden, with a willow at each corner;—but a truce to my complaints. You see, sir, I am no hypochondriac, as my fool of a doctor wants to persuade me: a hypochondriac shudders at every breath of air, trembles when a door is open, and looks upon a window as the entrance of death. But I, sir, never can have enough air; thorough draught or east wind, it is all the same to me, so that I do but breathe. Is that like hypochondria!—pshaw! But tell me, young gentleman, about your uncle; is he quite well,—stout—hearty,—does he breathe easily,—no oppression?"

"Sir, he enjoys exceedingly good health; he did please himself with the hope that I should give him good tidings of yourself, and another of his old friends, whom I accidentally saw yesterday,—Sir Peter Hales."

"Hales! Peter Hales!—ah! a clever little fellow that. How delighted Lester's good heart will be to hear that little Peter is so improved,—no longer a dissolute, harum-scarum fellow, throwing away his money, and always in debt. No, no; a respectable, steady character, an excellent manager.

an active member of parliament, domestic in private life,—oh! a very worthy man, sir, a very worthy man!”

“He seems altered, indeed, sir,” said Walter, who was young enough in this world to be surprised at this analogy, “but is still agreeable and fond of anecdote. He told me of his race with you for a thousand guineas.”

“Ah, don’t talk of those days,” said Mr. Courtland, shaking his head pensively. “It makes me melancholy. Yes, Peter ought to recollect that, for he has never paid me to this day, allowed to treat it as a jest, and aware he could have beat me if he would. But indeed it was my fault, sir, Peter had not then a thousand fortunes in the world; and when he grew rich, he became a steady character, and I did not like to remind him of our former follies. Ah! can I offer you a pinch of snuff!—You look French, sir, surely this room must attract you, though you are too polite to say so. Pray open that door, and turn this window, and put your chair right between the two. You have no notion how refreshing the draught is.”

Walter politely declined the proffered snuff, and thinking he had now made sufficient progress in the acquaintance of this singular non-hypocrite, to introduce the subject he had most at heart, hastened to speak of his father.

“I have chanced, sir,” said he, “very unexpectedly upon something that may belonged to my poor father.” Here he showed the whip. “I find from the saddle of whom I bought it, that the owner was at your house some twelve or fourteen years ago. I do not know whether you are aware that our family have heard nothing respecting my father’s fate for a considerably longer time than that which was elapsed since you appear to have seen him, if at least I may hope that he was your guest, and the owner of this whip; and any news you can

give me of him, any clue by which he can possibly be traced, would be to us all—to me in particular—an inestimable obligation.”

“Your father!” said Mr. Courtland. “Oh, ay, your uncle’s brother. What was his Christian name?—Henry?”

“Geoffrey.”

“Ay, exactly; Geoffrey! What! not been heard of!—his family not know where he is! A sad thing, sir; but he was always a wild fellow, now here, now there, like a flash of lightning. But it is true, it is true, he did stay a day here, several years ago, when I first bought the place. I can tell you all about it; but you seem agitated,—do come nearer the window:—there, that’s right. Well, sir, it is, as I said, a great many years ago,—perhaps fourteen,—and I was speaking to the landlord of the Greyhound about some hay he wished to sell, when a gentleman rode into the yard full tear, as your father always did ride, and in getting out of his way I recognised Geoffrey Lester. I did not know him well—far from it; but I had seen him once or twice with your uncle, and though he was a strange pickle, he sang a good song, and was deemed amusing. Well, sir, I accosted him; and, for the sake of your uncle, I asked him to dine with me, and take a bed at my new house. Ah! I little thought what a dear bargain it was to be! He accepted my invitation; for I fancy—no offence, sir,—there were few invitations that Mr. Geoffrey Lester ever refused to accept. We dined *à la carte*,—I am an old bachelor, sir,—and very entertaining he was, though his sentiments seemed to me broader than ever. He was capital, however, about the tricks he had played his creditors,—such manoeuvres—such escapes! After dinner he asked me if I ever corresponded with his brother. I told him no; that we were very good friends,

but never heard from each other; and he then said, 'Well, I shall surprise him with a visit shortly, but in case you *should* unexpectedly have any communication with him, don't mention having seen me; for, to tell you the truth, I am just returned from India, where I should have scraped up a little money, but that I spent it as fast as I got it. However, you know that I was always proverbially the luckiest fellow in the world, (and so, sir, your father was!) and while I was in India, I saved an old colonel's life at a tiger hunt: he went home shortly afterwards, and settled in Yorkshire; and the other day, on my return to England, to which my ill health drove me, I learned that my old colonel had died recently, and left me a handsome legacy, with his house in Yorkshire. I am now going down to Yorkshire to convert the chattels into gold—to receive my money; and I shall then seek out my good brother, my household gods, and, perhaps, though it's not likely, settle into a sober fellow for the rest of my life.' I don't tell you, young gentleman, that those were your father's exact words,—one can't remember verbatim so many years ago; but it was to that effect. He left me the next day, and I never heard any thing more of him: to say the truth, he was looking wonderfully yellow, and fearfully reduced. And I fancied at the time he could not live long: he was prematurely old, and decrepit in body, though gay in spirit; so that I had tacitly imagined, in never hearing of him more, that he had departed life. But good Heavens! did you never hear of this legacy?"

"Never: not a word!" said Walter, who had listened to these particulars in great surprise. "And to what part of Yorkshire did he say he was going?"

"That he did not mention."

"Nor the colonel's name?"

"Not as I remember; he might,

but I think not. But I am certain that the county was Yorkshire, and the gentleman, whatever his name, was a colonel. Stay: I recollect one more particular, which it is lucky I do remember. Your father, in giving me as I said before, in his own humorous strain, the history of his adventures, his hair-breadth escapes from his duns, the various disguises and the numerous *aliases* he had assumed, mentioned that the name he had borne in India—and by which, he assured me, he had made quite a good character—was Clarke: he also said, by the way, that he still kept to that name, and was very merry on the advantages of having so common a one,—'By which,' he observed, wittily, 'he could father all his own sins on some other Mr. Clarke, at the same time that he could seize and appropriate all the *merits* of all his other namesakes.' Ah, no offence, but he was a sad dog, that father of yours! So you see that, in all probability, if he ever reached Yorkshire, it was under the name of Clarke that he claimed and received his legacy."

"You have told me more," said Walter, joyfully, "than we have heard since his disappearance; and I shall turn my horses' heads northward to-morrow, by break of day. But you say, 'if he ever reached Yorkshire.' What should prevent him?"

"His health!" said the non-hypochondriac. "I should not be greatly surprised if—if—in short, you had better look at the gravestones by the way, for the name of Clarke."

"Perhaps you can give me the dates, sir," said Walter, somewhat cast down by that melancholy admonition.

"Ay! I'll see—I'll see after dinner; the commonness of the name has its disadvantages now. Poor Geoffrey! I dare say there are fifty tombs to the memory of fifty Clarks between this and York. But come, sir, there's the dinner-bell."

Whatever might have been the malady entailed upon the portly frame of Mr. Courtland by the vegetable life of the departed trees, a want of appetite was not among the number. Whenever a man is not abstinent from food, or from early habit, solitude makes its votaries particularly fond of their dinner. They have no other event wherewith to mark their day; they think over it, they anticipate it, they nourish its soft glow in their imagination; if they do look forward to anything else more than dinner, it is—supper.

Mr. Courtland deliberately pinned the napkin to his waistcoat, ordered all the windows to be thrown open, and set to work like the good canon in *Ge. Eliot*. He still retained enough of his former self to preserve an excellent cook; and though most of his viands were of the plainest, who does not know what skill it requires to produce an unexceptionable roast, or a delicious broil?

Half a dozen of strong soup,—three pounds, at least, of stewed carp, all the under part of a sirloin of beef, three quarters of a tongue,—the necessity of a chicken,—six partridges and a tartlet, having severally disappeared down the jaws of the invalid,

"*Et conata terrarum subacta
Prætor atroscum antium Catonis*,"

he still called for two devilled biscuits and an anchovy!

When these were gone, he had the wine set on a little table by the window, and declared that the air seemed ever than ever. Walter was no longer surprised at the singular nature of the non-hypochondriac's complaint.

* And every thing of earth subdued, except the resolute mind of Cato.

Walter declined the bed that Mr. Courtland offered him, though his host kindly assured him that it had no curtains, and that there was not a shutter to the house,—upon the plea of starting the next morning at day-break, and his consequent unwillingness to disturb the regular establishment of the invalid; and Courtland, who was still an excellent, hospitable, friendly man, suffered his friend's nephew to depart with regret. He supplied him, however, by a reference to an old note-book, with the date of the year, and even month, in which he had been favoured by a visit from Mr. Clarke, who, it seemed, had also changed his Christian name from Geoffrey to one beginning with D—; but whether it was David or Daniel the host remembered not. In parting with Walter, Courtland shook his head, and observed,—

"*Entre nous*, sir, I fear this may be a wild goose chase. Your father was too facetious to confine himself to fact—excuse me, sir; and, perhaps, the colonel and the legacy were merely inventions *pour passer le temps*; there was only one reason, indeed, that made me fully believe the story."

"What was that, sir?" asked Walter, blushing deeply, at the universality of that estimation his father had obtained.

"Excuse me, my young friend."

"Nay, sir, let me press you."

"Why, then, Mr. Geoffrey Lester did not ask me to lend him any money!"

The next morning, instead of reporting to the guardians of the metropolis, Walter had, upon this dubious clue, altered his journey northward; and with an unquiet yet sanguine spirit, the adventurous son commenced his search after the fate of a father evidently so unworthy of the anxiety he had excited.

CHAPTER VIII.

WALTER'S MEDITATIONS.—THE CORPORAL'S GRIEF AND ANGER.—THE CORPORAL PERSONALLY DESCRIBED.—AN EXPLANATION WITH HIS MASTER.—THE CORPORAL OPENS HIMSELF TO THE YOUNG TRAVELLER.—HIS OPINIONS ON LOVE;—ON THE WORLD;—ON THE PLEASURE AND RESPECTABILITY OF CHEATING;—ON LADIES—AND A PARTICULAR CLASS OF LADIES. ON AUTHORS;—ON THE VALUE OF WORDS;—ON FIGHTING;—WITH SUNSELY OTHER MATTERS OF EQUAL DELECTION AND IMPROVEMENT.—AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.

"Quale per incertam Lunam sub luce maligna
Est iter?"—VIRGIL.

THE road proscribed to our travellers by the change in their destination led them back over a considerable portion of the ground they had already traversed; and since the corporal took care that they should remain some hours in the place where they dined, night fell upon them as they found themselves in the midst of the same long and dreary stage in which they had encountered Sir Peter Hales and the two suspected highwaymen.

Walter's mind was full of the project on which he was bent. The reader can fully comprehend how vivid were the emotions called up by the hope of a solution to the enigma of his father's fate; and sanguinely did he now indulge those intense meditations with which the imaginative minds of the young always brood over every more favourite idea, until they exalt the hope into a passion. Everything connected with this strange and roving parent had possessed for the breast of his son not only an anxious, but indulgent interest. The judgment of a young man is always inclined to sympathise with the wilder

and more enterprising order of spirits; and Walter had been at no less for secret excuses wherewith to defend the irregular life and reckless habits of his parent. Amidst all his father's evident and utter want of principle, Walter clung with a natural and self-deceptive partiality to the few traits of courage or generosity which relieved, if they did not redeem, his character; traits which, with a character of that stamp, are so often, though always completely blended, and which generally cease with the commencement of age. He now felt elated by the conviction, as he had always been inspired by the hope, that it was to be his lot to discover one whom he still believed living, and whom he trusted to find unharmed. The same intimate persuasion of the "good luck" of Geoffrey Lester, which all who had known him appeared to entertain, was felt even in a more credulous and earnest degree by his son. Walter gave way now, indeed, to a variety of conjectures as to the motives which could have induced his father to persist in the concealment of his fate after his return to England; but such of those conjectures as, if the more rational, were also the more despondent, he speedily and resolutely

* Even as a journey by the unpropitious light of the uncertain moon.

dismissed. Sometimes he thought that his father, on learning the death of the wife he had almost lost, might have been possessed with a remorse which rendered him unwilling to disengage himself to the rest of his family, and a feeling that the main tie of home was broken; sometimes he thought that the wanderer had been disappointed in his expected legacy, and, dreading the attacks of his creditors, or unwilling to throw himself once more on the generosity of his brother, had again suddenly quitted England, and entered on some enterprise or occupation abroad. It was also possible, to one so reckless and changeable, that even, after receiving the legacy, a proposition from some wild adventurer might have hurried him away on any continental project at the mere impulse of the moment, for the impulse of the moment had always been the guide of his life; and once abroad, he might have returned to India, and in new connexions forgotten the old ties at home. Letters from abroad too, misery; and it was not improbable that the wanderer might have written repeatedly, and receiving no answer to his communications, imagined that the dissoluteness of his life had deprived him of the affections of his family, and desiring so well to have the proffered peace and intercourse rejected, believed that it actually was so. These, and a hundred similar conjectures, found favour in the eyes of the young traveller; but the chance of a fatal accident, or sudden death, no person so fully refused at present to include in the number of probabilities. Had his father been seized with a mortal illness on the road, was it not likely that, in the remorse occasioned in the hour of approaching death, he would have written to his brother, and recommending his child to his care, have apprised him of the addition to his fortune?

Walter then, did not meditate embarrassing his present journey by those researches among the dead which the worthy Courtland had so considerably recommended to his prudence; should his expedition, contrary to his hopes, prove wholly unsuccessful, it might then be well to retraced his steps and adopt the suggestion. But what man, at the age of twenty-one, ever took much precaution on the darker side of a question in which his heart was interested?

With what pleasure, escaping from conjecture to a more ultimate conclusion, did he, in recalling those words, in which his father had more than hinted to Courtland of his future amendment, contemplate recovering a parent made wise by years and sober by misfortunes, and restoring him to a hearth of tranquil virtues and peaceful enjoyments! He imagined to himself a scene of that domestic happiness which is so perfect in our dreams, because in our dreams monotony is always excluded from the picture. And, in this creation of Fancy, the form of Elleanor—his bright-eyed and gentle cousin—was not the least conspicuous. Since his altercation with Madeline, the love he had once thought so ineffaceable had faded into a dim and sullen hue; and, in proportion as the image of Madeline grew indistinct, that of her sister became more brilliant. Often, now, as he rode slowly onward, in the quiet of the deepening night, and the mellow stars softening all on which they shone, he pressed the little token of Elleanor's affection to his heart, and wondered that it was only within the last few days he had discovered that her eyes were more beautiful than Madeline's and her smile more touching. Meanwhile the redoubled corporal, who was by no means pleased with the change in his master's plans, imagined behind, whistling the most melancholy tune in his collection. No young lady,

and the patine of bells or caracots, had never felt more complacent satisfaction in a journey to London than that which had cheered the athletic breast of the veteran on finding himself, at last, within one day's gentle march of the metropolis. And no young lady, suddenly summoned back in the first flush of her *debut* by an unreasonable fit of gout or economy in papa, ever felt more irreparably aggravated than now did the dejected corporal. His master had not yet even acquainted him with the cause of the counter-march; and, in his own heart, he believed it nothing but the wanton levity and unpardonable fickleness "common to all them ore boys afore they have seen the world." He certainly considered himself a singularly ill-used and injured man, and drawing himself up to his full height, as if it were a matter with which heaven should be acquainted at the earliest possible opportunity, he indulged, as we before said, in the melancholy consolation of a whistled death-dance, occasionally interrupted by a long-drawn interlude, half-sigh, half-snuffle, of his favourite *ugh—laugh*.

And here, we remember, that we have not as yet given to our reader a fitting portrait of the corporal on horseback. Perhaps no better opportunity than the present may occur; and perhaps, also, Corporal Bunting, as well as Melrose Abbey, may seem a yet more interesting picture when viewed by the pale moonlight.

The corporal, then, wore on his head a small cocked hat, which had formerly belonged to the colonel of the forty-second—the prints of my uncle Toby may serve to suggest its shape; it had once boasted a feather—that was gone: but the gold lace, though tarnished, and the cockade, though battered, still remained. From under this shade the profile of the corporal assumed a particular aspect of heroism: though a good-looking

man in the main, it was his air, height, and complexion, which made him so; and, unlike Lucian's one-eyed prince, a side view was not the most favourable point in which his features could be regarded. His eyes, which were small and shrewd, were half hid by a pair of thick, shaggy brows, which, while he whistled, he moved to and fro, as a horse moves his ears when he gives warning that he intends to shy; his nose was straight—so far so good—but then it did not go far enough; for though it seemed no despicable proboscis in front, somehow or another it appeared exceedingly short in profile: to make up for this, the upper lip was of a length the more striking from being exceedingly straight;—it had learned to hold itself upright, and make the most of its length as well as its master: his under lip, alone protruded in the act of whistling, served yet more markedly to throw the nose into the back-ground; and, as for the chin—talk of the upper lip being long indeed!—the chin would have made two of it; such a chin! so long, so broad, so massive, had it been put on a dish it might have passed, without discredit, for a round of beef! and it looked yet larger than it was from the exceeding tightness of the stiff black-leather stock below, which forced forth all the flesh it encountered, into another chin—a remove to the round! The hat, being somewhat too small for the corporal, and being cocked knowingly in front, left the hinder half of the head exposed. And the hair, carried into a club according to the fashion, lay thick, and of a grizzled black, on the brawny shoulders below. The veteran was dressed in a blue coat, originally a frock; but the skirts having once, to the imminent peril of the place they guarded, caught fire, as the corporal stood basking himself at Peter Deakery's, had been so far amputated as to leave only the stump

of a tail, which just covered, and no more, that part which neither Art in lapels nor Nature in quadrupeds loves to leave wholly exposed. And that part, ah, how ample! Had Liston seen it, he would have had for ever his diminished—opposite to *hand*! No wonder the corporal had been so annoyed by the parcel of the previous day, a coat so short, and a —; but no matter, pass we to the rest! It was not only in its skirts that this waked coat was deficient; the corporal, who had within the last few years thriven busily in the inactive serenity of Grassdale, had outgrown it prodigiously across the chest and girth; nevertheless he managed to button it up. And thus the muscular proportions of the wearer bursting forth in all quarters, gave him the ludicrous appearance of a gigantic schoolboy. His wrists, and large snowy hands, both employed at the bridle of his hard-mouthed charger, were markedly visible, for it was the corporal's custom, whenever he came to an obscure part of the road, carefully to take off, and prudently to pocket, a pair of scrupulously clean white leather gloves, which smartened up his appearance prodigiously in passing through the towns in their route. His breeches were of yellow buckskin, and maddily tight; his stockings were of grey worsted; and a pair of laced boots, that reached the ascent of a very mountainous calf, but declined any further progress, completed his attire.

Fancy then this figure, seated with laborious and unswerving perpendicularity on a demi-pique saddle, ornamented with a huge pair of well-stuffed saddle-bags, and holsters revealing the stocks of a brace of immense pistols, the horse with its obstinate mouth thrown out, and the bridle drawn as tight as a bowstring! Its ears laid sullenly down, as if, like the corporal, it complained of going to Yorkshire.

and its long thick tail, not set up in a entirely and well-estimated arch, but hanging sheepishly down, as if resolved that its buttocks should at least be better covered than its master's!

And now, reader, it is not our fault if you cannot form some conception of the physical perfections of the corporal and his steed.

The reverie of the contemplative Bunting was interrupted by the voice of his master calling upon him to approach.

"Well, well," muttered he, "the youngster can't expect one as close at his heels as if we were trotting into Lennen, which we might be at this time, sure enough, if he had not been so d——d flimsy—ugh!"

"Bunting, I say, do you hear!"

"Yes, your honour, yes; this ere horse is so nation sluggish."

"Sluggish! why I thought he was too much the reverse, Bunting. I thought he was one rather requiring the bridle than the spur."

"Augh! your honour, he's slow when he should not, and fast when he should not; changes his mind from pure whim, or pure spite, new to the world, your honour, that's all; a different thing if properly broke. There be a many like him!"

"You mean to be personal, Mr. Bunting," said Walter, laughing at the evident ill-humour of his attendant.

"Augh! indeed and no!—I daren't—a poor man like me—go for to presume to be personal,—unless I get hold of a pointer!"

"Why, Bunting, you do not mean to say that you would be so ungenerous as to affront a man because he was poorer than you?—fie!"

"Waugh, your honour! and is not that the very reason why I'd affront him! Surely, it is not my betters I should affront, that would be ill-bred, your honour,—quite want of discipline."

"But we owe it to our great com-

mander," said Walter, "to love all men."

"Augh! sir, that's very good maxim,—none better—but shows ignorance of the world, sir—great!"

"Bunting, your way of thinking is quite disgraceful. Do you know, sir, that it is the Bible you were speaking of?"

"Augh, sir! but the Bible was addressed to them Jew creatures! However, it's an excellent book for the poor; keeps 'em in order, favours discipline,—none more so."

"Hold your tongue. I called you Bunting, because I think I heard you say you had once been at York. Do you know what town we shall pass on our road thither?"

"Not I, your honour; it's a mighty long way. What would the squire think?—just at Lunnon, too! Could have learned the whole road, sir, inns and all, if you had but gone on to Lunnon first. However, young gentlemen will be hasty,—no confidence in those older, and who are experienced in the world. I knows what I knows," and the corporal recommenced his whistle.

"Why, Bunting, you seem quite discontented at my change of journey. Are you tired of riding, or were you very eager to get to town?"

"Augh! sir; I was only thinking of what's best for your honour,—I! 'Tis not for me to like or dislike. However, the horses, poor creatures, must wait rest for some days. Them dumb animals can't go on for ever, bumpety, bumpety, as your honour and I do. Whaugh!"

"It is very true, Bunting; and I have had some thoughts of sending you home again with the horses, and travelling post."

"Eh!" grunted the corporal, opening his eyes, "hopes your honour ben't serious."

"Why, if you continue to look so serious, I must be serious too. You understand, Bunting!"

"Augh! and that's all, your honour," cried the corporal, brightening up; "shall look merry enough to-morrow, when one's in, as it were, like, to the change of the road. But you see, sir, it took me by surprise. Said I to myself, says I, it is an odd thing for you, Jacob Bunting, on the faith of a man, it is! to go tramp here, tramp there, without knowing why or wherefore, as if you were still a private in the forty-second, 'stead of a retired corporal. You see, your honour, my pride was a hurt; but it's all over now; only spites those beneath me,—I knows the world at my time o' life."

"Well, Bunting, when you learn the reason of my change of plan, you'll be perfectly satisfied that I do quite right. In a word, you know that my father has been long missing; I have found a clue by which I yet hope to trace him. This is the reason of my journey to Yorkshire."

"Augh!" said the corporal, "and a very good reason: you're a most excellent son, sir;—and Lunnon so nigh!"

"The thought of London seems to have bewitched you. Did you expect to find the streets of gold since you were there last?"

"A—well, sir; I hears they be greatly improved."

"Pshaw! you talk of knowing the world, Bunting, and yet you pant to enter it with all the inexperience of a boy. Why even I could set you an example."

"'Tis 'cause I knows the world," said the corporal, exceedingly nettled, "that I wants to get back to it. I have heard of some spoonies as never kist a girl, but never heard of any one who had kist a girl once that did not long to be at it again."

"And I suppose, Mr. Profligate, it is that longing which makes you so hot for London?"

"There have been worse longings nor that," quoth the corporal, gravely

"Perhaps you meditate marrying one of the London belles; an heiress,—eh?"

"Can't but say," said the corporal very solemnly, "but that might be tied to marry a fortune, if so be she was young, pretty, good tempered, and fell desperately in love with *me*,—best quality of all."

"You're a modest fellow."

"Why, the longer a man lives, the more knows his value; would not sell myself a bargain now, whatever might at twenty-one."

"At that rate you would be beyond all price at seventy," said Walter. "But now tell me, Bunting, were you ever in love,—really and honestly in love?"

"Indeed, your honour," said the corporal, "I have been over head and ears; but that was afore I learnt to swim. Love's very like bathing. At first we go souse to the bottom, but if we're not drowned then, we gather pluck, grow calm, strike out gently, and make a deal pleasanter thing of it afore we've done. I'll tell you, sir, what I think of love. 'twixt you and me, sir, 'tis not that great thing in life boys and girls want to make it out to be: if 'twere one's dinner, that would be summut, for one can't do without that; but lauk, sir, love's all in the fancy. One does not eat it, nor drink it; and as for the rest,—why it's bother!"

"Bunting, you're a beast," said Walter, in a rage; for though the corporal had come off with a slight rebuke for his sneer at religion, we grudge to say that an attack on the sacredness of love seemed a crime beyond all toleration to the theologian of twenty-one.

The corporal bowed, and thrust his tongue in his cheek.

There was a pause of some moments.

"And what," said Walter, for his spirits were raised, and he liked recurring to the quaint shrewdness of the

corporal, "and what, after all, is the great charm of the world, that you so much wished to return to it?"

"Augh!" replied the corporal, "'tis a pleasant thing to look about un with all one's eyes open; rogue here, rogue there,—keeps one alive;—life in Lannon, life in a village—all the difference 'twixt healthy walk and a doze in arm chair: by the faith of a man, 'tis!"

"What! it is pleasant to have rascals about one?"

"Surely yes," returned the corporal, dryly: "what so delightful like as to feel one's cliverness and 'bility all set an end—bristling up like a porky-pine! Nothing makes a man tread so light, feel so proud, breathe so briskly, as the knowledge that he has all his wits about him, that he's a match for any one, that the devil himself could not take him in!"

Walter laughed.

"And to feel one is likely to be cheated in the pleasantest way of passing one's time in town Bunting, eh?"

"Augh! and in cheating too!" answered the corporal; "'cause you sees, sir, there be two ways o' living; one to cheat,—one to be cheated. 'Tis pleasant enough to be cheated for a little while, as the youngers are, and as you'll be, your honour; but that's a pleasure don't last long—'tother lasts all your life: dare say your honour's often heard rich gentlemen say to their sons, 'You ought, for your own happiness' sake, like, my lad, to have summut to do; ought to have some profession, be you niver so rich!' very true, your honour; and what does that mean!—why, it means that, 'stead of being idle and cheated, the boy ought to be busy, and cheat—'augh!"

"Must a man who follows a profession necessarily cheat, then?"

"Baugh! can your honour ask that! Does not the lawyer cheat?"

and the doctor cheat—and the parson cheat, more than any! And that's the reason they all takes so much interest in their profession—bether!"

"But the soldier! you say nothing of him."

"Why, the soldier," said the corporal, with dignity,—"the *private* soldier, poor fellow! is only cheated; but when he comes far to get for to be as high as a corporal, or a sergeant, he comes far to get to bully others, and to cheat. Augh! then, 'tis not for the privates to cheat! that would be 'scurpion indeed,—save us!"

"The general, then, cheats more than any, I suppose!"

"Course, your honour: he talks to the world 'bout honour, an' glory, and love of his country, and such like! Augh! that's proper cheating!"

"You're a bitter fellow, Mr. Bunting. And, pray, what do you think of the ladies; are they as bad as the men?"

"Ladies—augh! when they're married—yes! but of all them ere creatures, I respects the kept ladies the most; on the faith of a man, I do! Gad! how well they knows the world—one quite envies the she-roguess; they beats the wives hollow! Augh! and your honour should see how they fawns, and flatters, and butters up a man, and makes him think they loves him like wiskey, all the time they runs him! They kisses money out of the miser, and sits in their satins, while the wife—'drot her!—sulks in a gingham. Oh, they be clivir creatures, and they'll do what they likes with Old Nick, when they gets there, for 'tis the old gentlemen they cozens the best; and then," continued the corporal, waxing more and more loquacious,—for his appetite in talking grew with that it fed on,—“then there be another set o' queer folks you'll see in Lunnun, sir, that is, if you falls in with 'em,—hang all together, quite in a clink. I seed lots on 'em

when lived with the colonel. Colonel Dymart, you knows—augh!"

"And what are they?"

"Rum ones, your honour: what they calls authors."

"Authors! what the deuce had you or the colonel to do with authors?"

"Augh! then, the colonel was a very fine gentleman, what the larned calls a my soon as; wrote little songs himself. 'Crossticks, you knows, your honour—once he made a play 'cause why?—he lived with an actress!"

"A very good reason, indeed, for emulating Shakspeare: and did the play succeed?"

"Fancy it did, your honour; for the colonel was a dab with the scissors."

"Scissors! the pen, you mean!"

"No! that's what the dirty authors make plays with, a lord and a colonel, my seen asses, always takes the scissors."

"How?"

"Why, the colonel's lady had lots of plays, and she marked a scene here, a jest there, a line in one place, a bit of blarney in t'other; and the colonel sat by with a great paper book, cut 'em out, pasted them in book. Augh! but the colonel pleased the town mightily."

"Well, so he saw a great many authors: and did not they please you?"

"Why, they be so d——d quarrelsome," said the corporal; "wriggle wrangle, wrangle, snap, growl, scratch; that's not what a man of the world does; man of the world niver quarrels; then, too, these creatures always fancy you forgets that their father was a clergymen; they always thinks more of their family, like, than their writings; and if they does not get money when they wants it, they bristles up and cries, 'Not treated like a gentleman, by G—!' Yet, after all, they've a deal of kindness in 'em, if you knows how to manage 'em—augh! but, cat-kindness,—paw to-day, claw to-mo'

row. And, then, they always marries young—the poor things!—and have a power of children, and live on the same and fortin they are to get one of these days; for, my eye, they be the most satiatest folks alive!”

“Why Bunting, what an observer you have been! Who could ever have imagined that you had made yourself master of so many varieties in men!”

“Augh, your honour, I had nothing to do when I was the colonel’s valley but to take notes to ladies and make use of my eyes. Always a ‘fleeitive man.’”

“It is odd that, with all your abilities, you did not provide better for yourself.”

“Twas not my fault,” said the corporal, quickly; “but, somehow, do what will, ‘tis not always the cleverest as foresees the best. But I be young yet, your honour!”

Walter stared at the corporal, and laughed outright: the corporal was exceedingly piqued.

“Augh! mayhap you thinks, sir, that cause not so young as you, not young at all; but what’s forty, or fifty, or fifty-five, in public life! Never hear much of men afore then. ‘Tis the autumn that reaps, spring sows, augh!—bother!”

“Very true, and very poetical. I see you did not live among authors for nothing.”

“I knows summut of language, your honour,” quoth the corporal, jocularly.

“It is evident.”

“For, to be a man of the world, sir, must know all the ins and outs of speechifying; ‘tis words, sir, that makes another man’s mare go your road. Augh! that must have been a clever man as invented language, wonders who ‘twas—mayhap Moses, your honour!”

“Never mind who it was,” said Walter, gravely; “use the gift discreetly.”

“Umph!” said the corporal. “Yes, your honour,” renewed he, after a pause, “it be a marvel to think on how much a man does in the way of cheating as has the gift of the gab. Wants a missis, talks her over; wants your purse, talks you out on it; wants a place, talks himself into it. What makes the parson!—words; the lawyer!—words; the parliament man!—words! Words can ruin a country, in the big house; words save souls, in the pulpits; words make even them ere authors, poor creturs! in every man’s mouth. Augh! sir, take note of the *words*, and the *things* will take care of themselves—bother!”

“Your reflections amaze me, Bunting,” said Walter, smiling. “But the night begins to close in. I trust we shall not meet with any misadventure.”

“‘Tis an uglysome bit of road!” said the corporal, looking round him.

“The pistols!”

“Primed and loaded, your honour.”

“After all, Bunting, a little skirmish would be no bad sport—eh! especially to an old soldier like you.”

“Augh, laugh! ‘tis no pleasant work fighting, without pay at least; ‘tis not like love and eating, your honour, the better for being what they calls ‘grats!’”

“Yet I have heard you talk of the pleasure of fighting; not for pay, Bunting, but for your king and country!”

“Augh! and that’s when I wanted to cheat the poor creturs at Grassdale, your honour, don’t take the liberty to talk stuff to my master!”

They continued thus to beguile the way till Walter again sank into a reverie, while the corporal, who began more and more to dislike the aspect of the ground they had entered on, still rode by his side.

The road was heavy, and wound down the long hill which had stricken so much dismay into the corporal’s stout heart on the previous day, when

ne had beheld its commencement at the extremity of the town, where but for him they had *not* dined. They were now a little more than a mile from the said town, the whole of the way was taken up by this hill, and the road, very different from the smoothed declivities of the present day, seemed to have been cut down the very steepest part of its centre; loose stones and deep ruts increased the difficulty of the descent, and it was with a slow pace and a guarded rein that both our travellers now continued their journey. On the left side of the road was a thick and lofty hedge; to the right, a wild, bare, savage heath, sloped downward, and just afforded a glimpse of the spires and chimneys of the town, at which the corporal was already supping in idea! That incomparable personage was, however, abruptly recalled to the present instant, by a most violent stumble on the part of his hard-mouthed, Roman-nosed horse. The horse was all but down, and the corporal all but over.

"D—r M," said the corporal slowly recovering his perpendicularity, "and the way to Lunnain was as smooth as a bowling green!"

Ere this rueful exclamation was well out of the corporal's mouth, a bullet whizzed past him from the hedge; it went so close to his ear, that but for that lucky stumble, Jacob Bunting had been as the grass of the field, which flourisheth one moment and is cut down the next!

Startled by the sound, the corporal's horse made off full tear down the hill, and carried him several paces beyond his master ere he had power to stop its career. But Walter, reining up his better managed steed, looked round for the enemy, nor looked in vain.

Three men started from the hedge with a simultaneous shout. Walter fired, but without effect; ere he could lay hand on the second pistol his bridle was seized, and a violent blow from a long double-handed bludgeon brought him to the ground.

BOOK III.

O Λύπη μάλιστα γ' ἡ διαφθείρουσά με.

M. Δευή γάρ ἡ θεός, ἀλλ' ὅμως ἰάσμεσι.

O. Μάριαί τε——

.

M. Φαντασμάτων δὲ τάδε νοσεῖς ποίων ὑπο;

OPERT. 398—407.

O Mightiest indeed is the grief consuming me.

M. Dreadful is the deity, but still placable.

O. The Furies also——

.

M. Urged by what apparitions do you rave thus?

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

FLAUNT AND VIOLENCE ENTER EVEN GRASSDALE.—PETER'S NEWS.—THE LOVERS WALK.—THE REAPPEARANCE.

"*Au! Whence comest thou?—What wouldst thou?*"—*Coriolanus.*

ONE evening Aram and Madeline were passing through the village in their accustomed walk, when Peter Dentry sallied forth from The Spotted Dog, and hurried up to the lovers with a countenance full of importance, and a little ruffled by fear.

"Oh, sir, sir (miss, your servant!),—have you heard the news? Two houses at Cheekington (a small town, some miles distant from Grassdale) were forcibly entered last night—robbed, your honour, robbed. Squire Tibson was tied to his bed, his bureau rifled, himself shockingly *confused* on the head; and the manservant, Sally—her sister lived with me, a very good girl—was locked up in the cupboard. As to the other house, they carried off all the plate. There were no less than four men all masked, your honour, and armed with pistols. What if they should come here! such a thing was never heard of before in these parts. But, sir—but, miss—do not be afraid: do not ye, now, for I may say with the Psalmist,—

"But wicked men shall drink the dross
Which they in wrath shall bring;
For I will lift my voice, and make
Them flee while I do sing."

"You could not find a more effectual method of putting them to flight, Peter," said Madeline, smiling; "but go and talk to my uncle. I know we have a whole magazine of blunder-busses and guns at home; they may be useful now. But you are well provided in case of attack. Have you not the corporal's famous cat, Jacobina!—surely a match for fifty robbers!"

"Ay, miss, on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, perhaps she may be; but really, it is no jesting matter. I don't say so how I am timbered; but, tho' flesh is grass,—I does not wish to be cut down afore my time. Ah, Mr. Aram—your house is very lonesome like; it is out of reach of all your neighbours. Hadn't you better, sir, take up your belongings at the squire's for the present?"

Madeline pressed Aram's arm, and looked up fearfully in his face. "Why, my good friend," said he to Dentry, "robbers will have little to gain in my house, unless they are given to learned pursuits. It would be something new, Peter, to see a gang of housebreakers making off with a tele-

ropo, or a pair of globes, or a great folio, covered with dust."

"Ay, your honour, but they may be the more savage for being disappointed."

"Well, well, Peter, we will see," replied Aram, impatiently; "meanwhile we may meet you again at the ball. Good evening for the present."

"Do, dearest Eugene—do, for Heaven's sake," said Madeline, with tears in her eyes, as, turning from Deatry, they directed their steps towards the quiet valley, at the end of which the student's house was situated, and which was now more than ever Madeline's favourite walk,—*"do, dearest Eugene, come up to the manor-house till these wretches are apprehended. Consider how open your house is to attack; and surely there can be no necessity to remain in it now."*

Aram's calm brow darkened for a moment. "What! dearest," said he; "can you be affected by the foolish fears of yon dotard? How do we know as yet, whether this improbable story have any foundation in truth? At all events, it is evidently exaggerated. Perhaps an invasion of the poultry-yard, in which some hungry fox was the real offender, may be the true origin of this terrible tale. Nay, love—nay, do not look thus reproachfully; it will be time enough for us, when we have sifted the grounds of alarm, to take our precautions; meanwhile, do not blame me if in your presence I cannot admit fear. Oh, Madeline—dear, dear Madeline, could you guess, could you dream, how different life has become to me since I knew you! Formerly, I will frankly own to you, that dark and bodding apprehensions were wont to lie heavy at my heart; the cloud was more familiar to me than the sunshine. But now I have grown a child, and can see around me nothing but hope; my life was winter—your love has eathed it into spring."

"And yet, Eugene—yet——"

"Yet what, my Madeline?"

"There are still moments when I have no power over your thoughts; moments when you break away from me; when you utter to yourself feelings in which I have no share, and which seem to steal the consciousness from your eye and the colour from your lip."

"Ah, indeed!" said Aram, quickly: "what! you watch me so closely!"

"Can you wonder that I do!" said Madeline, with an earnest tenderness in her voice.

"You must not, then—you must not," returned her lover almost fiercely. "I cannot bear too nice and sudden a scrutiny; consider how long I have clung to a stern and solitary independence of thought, which allows no watch, and forbids account of itself to any one. Leave it to time and your love to win their inevitable way. Ask not too much from me now. And mark—mark, I pray you, whenever, in spite of myself, these moods you refer to darken over me, heed not—listen not—*Leave me!*—solitude is their only cure! Promise me this, love—promise."

"It is a harsh request, Eugene; and I do not think I will grant you so complete a monopoly of thought," answered Madeline, playfully, yet half in earnest.

"Madeline," said Aram, with a deep solemnity of manner, "I ask a request on which my very love for you depends. From the depths of my soul, I implore you to grant it; yea, to the very letter."

"Why, why, this is——" began Madeline, when, encountering the full, the dark, the inscrutable gaze of her strange lover, she broke off in a sudden fear, which she could not analyse; and only added, in a low and subdued voice,—*"I promise to obey you."*

As if a weight were lifted from his

heart, Aram now brightened at once into himself in his happiest mood. He poured forth a torrent of grateful confidence, of buoyant love, that soon swept from the remembrance of the blushing and enchanted Madeline the momentary fear, the sudden chilliness, which his look had involuntarily stricken into her mind. And as they now wound along the most lonely part of that wild valley, his arm twined round her waist, and his low but sweet voice giving magic to the very air she breathed—she felt, perhaps, a more entire and untroubled sentiment of present, and a more credulous persuasion of future happiness, than she had ever experienced before. And Aram himself dwelt with a more lively and detailed fulness than he was wont, on the prospects they were to share, and the security and peace which retirement would bestow upon their life.

"Still it not," he said, "shall it not be, that we shall look from our retreat upon the shifting passions and the hollow loves of the distant world? We can have no petty object, no vain achievement, to distract the unity of our affection; we must be all in all to each other; for what else can there be to engross our thoughts and occupy our feelings *here*?"

"O, my beautiful love, you have selected one whom the world might deem a strange choice for youth and business like yours; you have, at best, selected one who can have no aid but yourself. The poets tell you, and rightly, that solitude is the fit sphere for love; but how few are the lovers whom solitude does not fatigue! They rush into retirement, with souls unprepared for its stern joys and its unvarying tranquillity; they weary of each other, because the solitude itself to which they fled adds upon and oppresses them. But to me, the freedom which low minds call obscurity is the aliment of life; I do

not enter the temples of Nature as a stranger, but the priest—nothing can ever tire me of the lone and august altars on which I sacrificed my youth; and now, what Nature, what Wisdom once were to me—no, no, more immeasurably more than these—you are! Oh, Madeline! methinks there is nothing under heaven like the feeling which puts us apart from all that agitates, and fevers, and degrades the herd of men; which grants us to control the tenor of our future life, because it annihilates our dependence upon others; and while the rest of earth are hurried on, blind and unconscious, by the hand of Fate, leaves us the sole lords of our destiny; and able, from the Past, which we have governed, to become the Prophets of our Future!"

At this moment Madeline uttered a faint shriek, and clung trembling to Aram's arm. Amazed, and aroused from his enthusiasm, he looked up and on seeing the cause of her alarm, seemed himself transfixed, as by a sudden terror, to the earth.

But a few paces distant, standing amidst the long and rank fern that grew on either side of their path, quite motionless, and looking on the pair with a sarcastic smile, stood the ominous stranger, whom the second chapter of our first Book introduced to the reader.

For one instant Aram seemed utterly appalled and overcome; his cheek grew the colour of death; and Madeline felt his heart beat with a loud, a fearful force beneath the breast to which she clung. But his was not the nature any earthly dread could long daunt. He whispered to Madeline to come on; and slowly, and with his usual firm but gliding step, continued his way.

"Good evening, Eugene Aram," said the stranger, and as he spoke, he touched his hat slightly to Madeline.

"I thank you," replied the student, in a calm voice; "do you want aught with me?"

"Humph!—yes, if it so please you."

"Pardon me, dear Madeline," said Aram, softly, and disengaging himself from her, "but for one moment."

He advanced to the stranger, and Madeline could not but note that, as Aram accosted him, his brow fell, and his manner seemed violent and agitated; but she could not hear the words of either, nor did the conference last above a minute. The stranger bowed, and turning away, soon vanished among the shrubs. Aram regained the side of his mistress.

"Who," cried she eagerly, "is that fearful man? What is his business? What his name?"

"He is a man whom I knew well some fourteen years ago," replied Aram, coldly, and with ease; "I did not then lead quite so lonely a life, and we were thrown much together. Since that time, he has been in unfortunate circumstances—rejoined the army—he was in early life a soldier, and had been disbanded—entered into business, and failed; in short, he has partaken of those vicissitudes inseparable from the life of one driven to seek the world. When he travelled this road some months ago, he accidentally heard of my residence in the neighbourhood, and naturally sought me. Poor as I am, I was of some assistance to him. His route brings

him hither again, and he again seeks me: I suppose, too, that I must again aid him."

"And is that, *indeed*, all?" said Madeline, breathing more freely. "Well, poor man, if he be your friend, he must be inoffensive—I have done him wrong. And does he want money? I have some to give him—here Eugene!" And the simple hearted girl put her purse into Aram's hand.

"No, dearest," said he, shrinking back; "no, we shall not require *your* contribution: I can easily spare him enough for the present. But let us turn back, it grows chill."

"And why did he leave us, Eugene?"

"Because I desired him to visit me at home an hour hence."

"An hour! then you will not sup with us to-night?"

"No, not this night, dearest."

The conversation now ceased; Madeline in vain endeavoured to renew it. Aram, though without relapsing into one of his frequent reveries, answered her only in monosyllables. They arrived at the manor house, and Aram at the garden gate took leave of her for the night, and hastened backward towards his home. Madeline, after watching his form through the deepening shadows until it disappeared, entered the house with a listless step; a nameless and thrilling presentiment crept to her heart; and she could have sat down and wept though without a cause.

CHAPTER II.

THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN ARAM AND THE STRANGER.

"The spirits I have raised abandon me ;
The spells which I have studied baffle me,"—*Manfred.*

MEANWHILE ARAM strode rapidly through the village, and not till he had regained the solitary valley did he relax his step.

The evening had already deepened into night. Along the sore and melancholy woods the autumnal winds crept with a lowly but gathering moan. Where the water held its course, a damp and ghostly mist clung to the air, but the skies were calm, and chequered only by a few clouds, that swept in long, white, spectral streaks, over the solemn stars. Now and then the bat wheeled swiftly round, almost touching the figure of the student, as he walked musingly onward. And the owl, that before the month waned many days, would be seen no more in that region, came heavily from the trees like a guilty thought that deserts its shade. It was one of those nights half dim, half glorious, which mark the early decline of the year. Nature seemed restless and impatient with change; there were those signs in the atmosphere which leave the most experienced in doubt whether the morning may rise in storm or sunshine. And in this particular period, the sky's influences seem to hasten the arrival like with their own mysterious and wayward spirit of change. The birds desert their summer haunts, an uncomfortable despatcher pervades the bristly creation: even men in this unsettled season have considered them-

selves, more than at others, stirred by the motion and whisperings of their genius. And every creature that flows upon the tide of the Universal Life of Things, feels upon the ruffled surface the mighty and solemn change which is at work within its depths.

And now Aram had nearly threaded the valley, and his own abode became visible on the opening plain, when the stranger emerged from the trees to the right, and suddenly stood before the student. "I tarried for you here, Aram," said he, "instead of seeking you at home, at the time you fixed; for there are certain private reasons which make it prudent I should keep as much as possible among the owls, and it was therefore safer, if not more pleasant, to lie here amidst the fern, than to make it. 'Tis merry in the village yonder."

"And what," said Aram, "again brings you hither? Did you not say, when you visited me some months since, that you were about to settle in a distant part of the country, with a relation?"

"And so I intended; but Pate, as you would say, or the Devil, as I should, ordered it otherwise. I had not long told you, when I fell in with some old friends, bold spirits and true; the brave outlaws of the road and the field. Shall I have any share in confirming that I professed their society, a society not unwilling to see, to the full and solitary life that I sought, have had no counting my old and gallant relations on. 'Woe, woe,

• That species called the great wood owl.

after all, may live these twenty years, and at the end can scarcely leave me enough for a week's flit back at the hazard table? In a word, I joined my gallant friends, and intrusted myself to their guidance. Since then, we have cruised around the country, regulated ourselves cheerily, frightened the timid, silenced the fractious, and by the help of your fate, or my devil, have found ourselves, by accident, brought to exhibit our valour in this very district, honoured by the dwelling place of my learned friend Eugene Aram."

"Trifle not with me, Houseman," said Aram sternly. "I scarcely yet understand you. Do you mean to imply that yourself, and the lawless associates you say you have joined, are lying out now for plunder in these parts?"

"You say it: perhaps you heard of our exploits last night, some four miles hence!"

"Ha! was that villainy yours?"

"Villany!" repeated Houseman, in a tone of sullen offence. "Come, Master Aram, these words must not pass between you and me, friends of such date, and on such a footing."

"Talk not of the past," replied Aram, with a livid lip, "and call not those whom Destiny once, in despite of Nature, drove down her dark tide in a momentary companionship, by the name of friends. Friends we are not; but while we live there is a tie between us stronger than that of friendship."

"You speak truth and wisdom," said Houseman, sneeringly; "for my part, I care not what you call us, friends or foes."

"Foes, foes!" exclaimed Aram, abruptly; "not that. Has life no medium in its ties!—Pooh—pooh! not foes; we may not be foes to each other."

"It were foolish, at least at present," said Houseman, carelessly.

"Look you, Houseman," continued Aram, drawing his comrade from the path into a wilder part of the scene, and, as he spoke, his words were couched in a more low and inward voice than heretofore. "Look you, I cannot live and have my life darkened thus by your presence. Is not the world wide enough for us both? Why haunt each other? what have you to gain from me? Can the thoughts that my sight recalls to you be brighter, or more peaceful, than those which start upon me when I gaze on you? Does not a ghastly air, a charnel breath, hover about us both? Why perversely incur a torture it is so easy to avoid? Leave me—leave these scenes. All earth spreads before you—choose your pursuits, and your resting-place elsewhere, but grudge me not this little spot."

"I have no wish to disturb you, Eugene Aram, but I must live; and in order to live I must obey my companions: if I deserted them, it would be to starve. They will not linger long in this district; a week, it may be; a fortnight, at most: then, like the Indian animal, they will strip the leaves, and desert the tree. In a word, after we have swept the country, we are gone."

"Houseman, Houseman!" said Aram, passionately, and frowning till his brows almost hid his eyes; but that part of the orb which they did not hide, seemed as living fire; "I now implore, but I can threaten—beware!—silence, I say" (and he stamped his foot violently on the ground, as he saw Houseman about to interrupt him); "listen to me throughout. Speak not to me of tarrying here—speak not of days, of weeks—every hour of which would sound upon my ear like a death-knell. Dream not of a sojourn in these tranquil shades, upon an errand of dread and violence—the minions of the law aroused against you, girt with the

clutches of apprehension, and a shame-
ful death—"

"And a full confession of my past
sins," interrupted Houseman, laugh-
ing wildly.

"Foul devil!" cried Aram, grasp-
ing his comrade by the throat, and
shaking him with a vehemence that
Houseman, though a man of great
strength and sinew, impotently at-
tempted to resist. "Breathe but
another word of such import; dare to
measure me with the vengeance of such
a thing as this, and, by the Heaven
above us, I will lay thee dead at my
feet!"

"Release my throat, or you will
commit murder," gasped Houseman,
with difficulty, and growing already
black in the face.

Aram suddenly relinquished his
grip, and walked away with a hurried
step, muttering to himself. He then
returned to the side of Houseman,
whose flesh still quivered rather with
rage or fear, and, his own self-pos-
session completely restored, stood
gazing upon him with folded arms,
and his usual deep and passionless
composure of countenance; and House-
man, if he could not boldly confront,
did not altogether shrink from, his
eye. So there and thus they stood,
at a little distance from each other,
both alone, and yet with something
unusually fearful in their silence.

"Houseman," said Aram at length
in a calm, yet hollow voice, "it may
be that I was wrong; but there lives
no man on earth, save you, who could
thus stir my blood,—nor you with
ease. And know, when you menace
me, that it is not your menace that
subdues or shakes my spirit; but that
which rolls my veins of their even
tenor is, that you should deem your
menace could have such power, or that
you,—that any man,—should arrogate
to himself the thought that he could,
by the prospect of whatever danger,
humble the son' and curb the will of

Eugene Aram. And now I am calm;
say what you will, I cannot be vexed
again."

"I have done," replied Houseman,
coldly. "I have *nothing* to say; fare-
well!" and he moved away among the
trees.

"Stay," cried Aram, in some agita-
tion. "stay; we must not part thus.
Look you, Houseman, you say you
would starve should you leave your
present associates. That may not be;
quit them this night,—this moment;
leave the neighbourhood, and the
little in my power is at your will."

"As to that," said Houseman, dryly,
"what is in your power is, I fear me,
so little as not to counterbalance the
advantages I should lose in quitting
my companions. I expect to not
come three hundreds before I leave
these parts."

"Some three hundreds!" repeated
Aram, receding; "that were indeed
beyond me. I told you when we last
met that it is only from an annual
payment I draw the means of sub-
sistence."

"I remember it. I do not ask you
for money, Eugene Aram; these hands
can maintain me," replied Houseman,
smiling grimly. "I told you at once
the sum I expected to receive *somewhere*,
in order to prove that you need
not vex your benevolent heart to
afford me relief. I knew well the
sum I named was out of your power,
unless indeed it be part of the mar-
riage portion you are about to receive
with your bride. *Fie, Aram!* what
secrets from your old friend! You
see I pick up the news of the place
without your confidence."

Again Aram's face worked, and his
lip quivered; but he conquered his
passion with a surprising self-con-
mand, and answered mildly,—

"I do not know, Houseman, whether
I shall receive any marriage portion
whatsoever; if I do, I am willing to
make some arrangement by which I

could *engage* you to molest me no more. But if you wants several days to my marriage; quit the neighbour-hood now, and a month hence let us meet again. Whatever at that time may be my resources, you shall frankly know them."

"It cannot be," said Houseman. "I quit not these districts without a certain sum, not in hope, but possession. But why interfere with me? I seek not my hoards in your coffer. Why so anxious that I should not breathe the same air as yourself?"

"It matters not," replied Aram, with a deep and ghastly voice; "but when you are near me, I feel as if I were with the dead: it is a spectre that I would exorcise in ridding me of your presence. Yet this is not what I now speak of. You are engaged, according to your own lips, in lawless and midnight schemes, in which you may (and the tide of chance runs towards that bourne) be seized by the hand of Justice."

"Ho!" said Houseman, sullenly; "and was it not for saying that you feared this, and its probable consequences, that you well-nigh stifled me, but now?—So truth may be said one moment with impunity, and the next at peril of life! These are the subtleties of you wise schoolmen, I suppose. Your Aristotles and your Zenos, your Platos and your Epicurus, teach you notable distinctions, truly!"

"Peace!" said Aram; "are we at all times ourselves? Are the passions never our masters? You maddened me into anger; behold, I am now calm: the subjects discussed between myself and you are of life and death; let us approach them with our senses collected and prepared. What, Houseman, are you bent upon your own destruction, as well as mine, that you persevere in courses which *must* end in a death of shame?"

"What else can I do? I will not

work, and I cannot live like you in alone wilderness on a crust of bread. Nor is my name like yours, mottled by the praise of honest men: my character is marked; those who once welcomed me shun now. I have no resource for society (for I cannot face myself alone), but in the fellowship of men like myself, whom the world has thrust from its pale. I have no resource for bread, save in the pursuits that are branded by justice, and accompanied with snares and danger. What would you have me do?"

"Is it not better," said Aram, "to enjoy peace and safety upon a small but certain pittance, than to live thus from hand to mouth? vibrating from wealth to famine, and the rope around your neck, sleeping and awake? Seek your relation; in that quarter, you yourself said your character was not branded: live with him, and know the quiet of easy days, and I promise you, that if aught be in my power to make your lot more suitable to your wants, so long as you lead the life of honest men, it shall be freely yours. Is not this better, Houseman, than a short and sleepless career of dread?"

"Aram," answered Houseman, "are you, in truth, calm enough to hear me speak? I warn you, that if again you forget yourself, and lay hands on me——"

"Threaten not, threaten not," interrupted Aram, "but proceed; all within me is now still and cold as ice. Proceed without fear or scruple."

"Be it so; we do not love one another: you have affected contempt for me—and I—I—no matter—I am not a stone or a stick, that I should not feel. You have scorned me—you have outraged me—you have not assumed towards me even the decent hypocrisies of prudence—yet now you would ask of me the conduct, the sympathy, the forbearance, the consideration of friendship. You wish that I should quit these scenes, where, to

my judgment, a certain advantage secures me, solely that I may lighten your breast of its selfish fears. You tread the path that awaits me on your own account. And being apprehensive, you forebode your own doom. You ask me, nay not ask, you would command, you would awe me to sacrifice my will and wishes, in order to soothe your anxieties and strengthen your own safety. Mark me? Eugene Aram, I have been treated as a tool, and I will not be governed as a friend. I will not stir from the vicinity of your home till my designs be fulfilled,—I enjoy, I hug myself in your torments. I exult in the terror with which you will hear of each new enterprise, each new daring, each new triumph of myself and my gallant comrades. And now I am avenged for the affront you put upon me."

Though Aram trembled, with suppressed passions, from limb to limb, his voice was still calm, and his lip even wore a smile as he answered —

"I was prepared for this, Houseman; you utter nothing that surprises or appeals me. You hate me; it is natural: men tainted as we are, rarely look on each other with a friendly or a pitying eye. But, Houseman, I know you — you are a man of vehement passions, but interest with you is yet stronger than passion. If not, our conference is over. Go — and do your worst."

"You are right, most learned scholar, I can fetter the tiger within, in his deadliest rage, by a golden chain."

"Well, then, Houseman, it is not your interest to betray me — my destruction is your own."

"I grant it; but if I am apprehended, and to be hung for robbery."

"It will be no longer an object to you, to care for my safety. Answered, I comprehend this. But my interest induces me to wish that you be torn from the peril of apprehension, and

your interest replies, that if you can obtain equal advantages in security, you would forego advantages accompanied by peril. Say what we will, wander as we will, it is to this point that we must return at last."

"Nothing can be clearer, and were you a rich man, Eugene Aram, or could you obtain your bride's dowry (no doubt a respectable sum) in advance, the arrangement might at once be settled."

Aram gasped for breath, and, as usual with him in emotion, made several strides muttering rapidly, and indistinctly to himself, and then returned.

"Even were this possible, it would be but a short reprieve; I could not trust you; the sum would be spent, and I again in the state to which you have compelled me now, but without the means again to relieve myself. No, no! If the blow must fall, be it so one day as another."

"As you will," said Houseman; "but ——" Just at that moment, a long shrill whistle sounded below, as from the water. Houseman paused abruptly—"That signal is from my comrades; I must away. Hark, again! Farewell, Aram."

"Farewell, if it must be so," said Aram, in a tone of dogged audaciousness; "but to-morrow, should you know of any means by which I could feel secure, beyond the security of your own word, from your future molestation, I might—yet how!"

"To-morrow," said Houseman, "I cannot answer for myself; it is not always that I can leave my comrades: a natural jealousy makes them suspicious of the absence of their friends. Yet hold: the night after to-morrow, the Sabbath night, most virtuous Aram, I can meet you — but not here — some miller house. You know the foot of the Devil's Crag, by the water-fall; it is a spot quiet and shaded enough in all conscience for our inter-

view ; and I will tell you a secret I would trust to no other man (hark, again) — it is close by our present lurking place. Meet me there! — it would, indeed, be pleasanter to hold our conference under shelter — but just at present, I would rather not trust myself beneath any honest man's roof in this neighbourhood. Adieu ! on Sunday night, one hour before midnight."

The robber, for such then he was, waved his hand, and hurried away in the direction from which the signal seemed to come.

Aram gazed after him, but with vacant eyes, and remained for several minutes rooted to the spot, as if the very life had left him.

"The Sabbath night!" said he, at length, moving slowly on; "and I must span forth my existence in trouble and fear till then — till then! what remedy can I *then* invent? It is clear that I can have no dependence on his word, if won; and I have not even aught wherewith to buy it. But courage, courage, my heart; and work thou my lousy brain! Ye have never failed me yet!"

CHAPTER III.

FRESH ALARM IN THE VILLAGE.—LESTER'S VISIT TO ARAM.—A TRAIT OF DELICATE KINDNESS IN THE STUDENT.—MAEELINE.—HER PRONENESS TO CONFIDE.—THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN LESTER AND ARAM.—THE PERSONS BY WHOM IT IS INTERRUPTED.

"Not my own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control."

SHAKESPEARE'S *Sonnets*.

"Commend me to their love, and I am proud, say,
That my occasions have found time to use them,
Toward a supply of money; let the request
Be fifty talents."—*Timon of Athens*.

THE next morning the whole village was alive and bustling with terror and consternation. Another, and a yet more daring robbery, had been committed in the neighbourhood, and the police of the county town had been summoned, and were now busy in search of the offenders. Aram had been early disturbed by the officious anxiety of some of his neighbours; and it wanted yet some hours of noon, when Lester himself came to seek and consult with the student.

Aram was alone in his large and gloomy chamber, surrounded, as usual, by his books, but not, as usual, engaged in their contents. With his

face leaning on his hand, and his eyes gazing on a dull fire, that crept heavily upward through the damp fuel, he sat by his hearth, listless, but wrapped in thought.

"Well, my friend," said Lester, displacing the books from one of the chairs, and drawing the seat near the student's—"you have ere this heard the news; and, indeed, in a county so quiet as ours, those outrages appear the more fearful from their being so unlooked for. We must set a guard in the village, Aram, and you *must* leave this defenceless hermitage and come down to us,—not for your own sake, but consider you will be an

add them as reward to Madeline. You will lock up the house, dismiss your poor old servant to her friends in the village, and walk back with me at once to the hall."

Aram turned uneasily in his chair.

"I feel your kindness," said he, after a pause, "but I cannot accept it.—Madeline——" he stopped short at that name, and added, in an altered tone,—“no, I will be one of the watch, Lester. I will look to her—to your safety; but I cannot sleep under another roof. I am superstitious, Lester—superstitious. I have made a vow, a foolish one, perhaps, but I dare not break it. And my vow binds me not to pass a night, save on indispensable and urgent necessity, any where but in my own home."

"But there is necessity."

"My conscience says not," said Aram, smiling. "Peace, my good friend, we cannot conquer men's fancies, or wrestle with man's corruption."

Lester in vain attempted to shake Aram's resolution on this head; he found him immovable, and gave up the effort in despair.

"Well," said he, "at all events we have set up a watch, and can spare you a couple of defenders. They shall reconnoitre in the neighbourhood of your house, if you persevere in your determination; and this will serve, in some slight measure, to satisfy poor Madeline."

"Be it so," replied Aram. "and dear Madeline herself, is she so alarmed?"

And now, in spite of all the more worrying and haggard thoughts that preyed upon his breast, and the dangers by which he surrounded himself, the student's face, as he listened with eager attention to every word that Lester uttered concerning his daughter, testified how glad he yet was to the least incident that related to Madeline, and how easily her inno-

cent and peaceful remembrance could allure him from himself.

"This room," said Lester, looking round, "will be, I conclude, after Madeline's own heart; but will you always suffer her here? Students do not sometimes like even the gentlest interruption."

"I have not forgotten that Madeline's comfort requires some more cheerful retreat than this," said Aram, with a melancholy expression of countenance. "Follow me, Lester; I meant this for a little surprise to her. But Heaven only knows if I shall ever show it to herself."

"Why! what doubt of that can even your hoding temper indulge?"

"We are as the wanderers in the desert," answered Aram, "who are taught wisely to distrust their own senses—that which they gaze upon as the waters of existence, is often but a faithless vapour that would lure them to destruction."

In thus speaking he had traversed the room, and, opening a door, showed a small chamber with which it communicated, and which Aram had fitted up with evident, and not ungraceful care. Every article of furniture that Madeline might most fancy, he had procured from the neighbouring town. And some of the lighter and more attractive books that he possessed, were ranged around on shelves, above which were vases, intended for flowers, the window opened upon a little plot that had been lately broken up into a small garden, and was already intersected with walks, and rich with shrubs.

There was something in this chamber that so entirely contrasted the one it adjoined, something so light, and cheerful, and even gay in its decoration and general aspect, that Lester uttered an exclamation of delight and surprise. And indeed it did appear to him touching, that this austere scholar, so wrapped in thought, and so inattentive to the

common forms of life, should have manifested so much of tender and delicate consideration. In another it would have been nothing, but in Aram it was a trait that brought involuntary tears to the eyes of the good Lester; Aram observed them; he walked hastily away to the window, and sighed heavily; this did not escape his friend's notice, and after commenting on the attractions of the little room, Lester said,

"You seem oppressed in spirits, Eugene: can anything have chanced to disturb you, beyond, at least, these alarms, which are enough to agitate the nerves of the hardiest of us?"

"No," said Aram; "I had no sleep last night, and my health is easily affected, and with my health my mind. But let us go to Madeline; the sight of her will revive me."

They then strolled down to the manor-house, and met by the way a band of the younger heroes of the village, who had volunteered to act as a patrol, and who were now marshalled by Peter Dealtry, in a fit of heroic enthusiasm.

Although it was broad daylight, and, consequently there was little cause of immediate alarm, the worthy publican carried on his shoulder a musket on full cock; and each moment he kept peeping about, as if not only every bush, but every blade of grass, contained an ambuscade, ready to spring up the instant he was off his guard. By his side the redoubted Jacobina, who had transferred to her new master the attachment she had originally possessed for the corporal, trotted peeringly along, her tail perpendicularly cocked, and her ears moving to and fro with a most incomparable air of vigilant sagacity. The cautious Peter every now and then checked her ardour, as she was about to quicken her step, and enliven the march by gambols better adapted to serene times.

"Soho, Jacobina, soho! gently, girl, gently; thou little knowest the dangers that may beset thee. Come up, my good fellows, come to The Spotted Dog; I will tap a barrel on purpose for you; and we will settle the plan of defence for the night. Jacobina, come in, I say; come in,

'Lest, like a lion, they thee tear,
And rend in pieces small;
While there is none to succour thee,
And rid thee out of thrall.'

What ho, there! Oh! I beg your honour's pardon! Your servant, Mr. Aram."

"What, patrolling already?" said the squire; "your men will be tired before they are wanted; reserve their ardour for the night."

"Oh, your honour, I have only been heating up for recruits; and we are going to consult a bit at home. Ah! what a pity the corporal isn't here: he would have been a tower of strength unto the righteous. But howsoever, I do my best to supply his place—Jacobina, child, be still: I can't say as I knows the musket-service, your honour; but I fancy's as how we can do it extemporaneous-like at a pinch."

"A bold heart, Peter, is the best preparation," said the squire.

"And," quoth Peter, quickly, "what saith the worshipful Mister Sternhold, in the 45th Psalm, 5th verse?—

'Go forth with godly speed, in meekness,
Truth and right;
And thy right hand shall thee instruct in
works of dreadful might.'

Peter quoted these verses, especially the last, with a truculent frown, and a brandishing of the musket, that surprisingly encouraged the hearts of his little armament; and with a general murmur of enthusiasm, the warlike band marched off to The Spotted Dog.

Lester and his companion found Madeline and Ellinor standing at the window of the hall; and Madeline's

light step was the first that sprang forward to welcome their return: even the face of the student brightened when he saw the kindling eye, the parted lip, the buoyant form, from which the pure and innocent gladness she felt on seeing him broke forth.

There was a remarkable *trustfulness* in Madeline's disposition. Thoughtful and grave as she was by nature, she was yet ever inclined to the more sanguine colourings of life: she never turned to the future with fear—a placid sentiment of hope slept at her heart—she was one who surrendered herself with a fond and implicit faith to the guidance of all she loved; and to the chances of life. It was a sweet indulgence of the mind, which made one of her most beautiful traits of character: there is something so unselfish in tempers reluctant to despond. You see that such persons are not occupied with their own existence; they are not fretting the calm of the present life with the egotisms of care, and conjecture, and calculation; if they learn anxiety, it is for another: but in the heart of that other, how entire is their trust!

It was this disposition in Madeline which perpetually charmed, and yet perpetually wrung, the soul of her wild lover; and as she now delightedly lying upon his arm, uttering her joy at seeing him safe, and presently forgetting that there ever had been cause for alarm, his heart was filled with the most gloomy sense of horror and desolation. "What," thought he, "if this poor unconscious girl could dream that at this moment I am girded with peril, from which I see no ultimate escape! Delay it as I will, it seems as if the blow must come at last. What, if she could think how fearful is my interest in these outrages, that in all probability, if their authors are detected, there is one who will drag me into their ruin; that I am given

over, bound and blinded, into the hands of another; and that other, a man steeled to mercy, and withheld from my destruction by a thread—a thread that a blow on himself would snap. Great God! whosoever I turn, I see despair! And she—she clings to me; and beholding me, thinks the whole earth is filled with hope!"

While these thoughts darkened his mind, Madeline drew him onward into the more sequestered walks of the garden, to show him some flowers she had transplanted. And when an hour afterwards he returned to the hall, so soothing had been the influence of her looks and words upon Aram, that if he had not forgotten the situation in which he stood, he had at least calmed himself to regard with a steady eye the chances of escape.

The meal of the day passed as cheerfully as usual, and when Aram and his host were left over their abstemious potations, the former proposed a walk before the evening deepened. Lester readily consented, and they sauntered into the fields. The square soon perceived that something was on Aram's mind, of which he felt evident embarrassment in ridding himself at length the student said, rather abruptly,—

"My dear friend, I am but a bad beggar, and therefore let me get over my request as expeditiously as possible. You said to me once that you intended bestowing some dowry upon Madeline—a dowry I would and could willingly dispense with; but should you of that sum be now able to spare me some portion as a loan,—should you have some three hundred pounds with which you could accommodate me——"

"Say no more, Eugene, say no more," interrupted the square; "you can have double that amount. I ought to have foreseen that your preparations for your approaching marriage, must have occasioned you some

inconvenience: you can have six hundred pounds from me to-morrow."

Aram's eyes brightened. "It is too much, too much, my generous friend," said he; "the half suffices;—but, but, a debt of old standing presses me urgently, and to-morrow, or rather Monday morning, is the time fixed for payment."

"Consider it arranged," said Lester, putting his hand on Aram's arm; and then leaning on it gently, he added, "And now that we are on this subject, let me tell you what I intended as a gift to you and my dear Madeline; it is but small, but my estates are rigidly entailed on Walter, and of poor value in themselves, and it is half the savings of many years."

The squire then named a sum, which, however small it may seem to our reader, was not considered a despicable portion for the daughter of a small country squire at that day, and was, in reality, a generous sacrifice for one whose whole income was scarcely, at the most, seven hundred a-year. The sum mentioned doubled that now to be lent, and which was of course a part of it; an equal portion was reserved for Ellinor.

"And to tell you the truth," said the squire, "you must give me some little time for the remainder—for not thinking some months ago it would be so soon wanted, I laid out eighteen hundred pounds in the purchase of Winclose farm, six of which (the remainder of your share) I can pay off at the end of the year: the other twelve, Ellinor's portion, will remain a mortgage on the farm itself. And between us," added the squire, "I do hope that I need be in no hurry respecting her, dear girl. When Walter returns, I trust matters may be arranged, in a manner, and through a channel, that would gratify the most cherished wish of my heart. I am convinced that Ellinor is exactly suited

to him; and, unless he should lose his senses for some one else in the course of his travels, I trust that he will not be long returned before he will make the same discovery. I think of writing to him very shortly after your marriage, and making him promise, at all events, to revisit us at Christmas.

[Ah! Eugene, we shall be a happy party then, I trust. And be assured that we shall beat up your quarters, and put your hospitality, and Madeline's housewifery to the test.]

Therewith the good squire ran on for some minutes in the warmth of his heart, dilating on the fireside prospects before them, and rallying the student on those secluded habits, which he promised him he should no longer indulge with impunity.

"But it is growing dark," said he, awakening from the theme which had carried him away, "and by this time Peter and our patrol will be at the hall. I told them to look up in the evening, in order to appoint their several duties and stations—let us turn back. Indeed, Aram, I can assure you, that I, for my own part, have some strong reasons to take precautions against any attack; for besides the old family plate (though that 's not much), I have,—you know the bureau in the parlour to the left of the hall?—well, I have in that bureau three hundred guineas, which I have not as yet been able to take to safe hands at —, and which, by the way, will be yours to-morrow. So, you see, it would be no light misfortune to me to be robbed."

"Hist!" said Aram, stopping short; "I think I heard steps on the other side of the hedge."

The squire listened, but heard nothing; the senses of his companion were, however, remarkably acute, more especially that of hearing.

"There is certainly some one; nay, I catch the steps of two persons," whispered he to Lester.

"Let us come round the hedge by the gap below."

They both quickened their pace, and gaining the other side of the hedge, did indeed perceive two men in velvet frocks strolling on towards the village.

"They are strangers, too," said the squire, suspiciously; "not Grassdale men—Humph! would they have overheard us, think you?"

"If men whose business it is to overhear their neighbours—yes; but not if they be honest men," answered Aram, in one of those shrewd remarks which he often uttered, and which seemed almost incompatible with the tenor of those quiet and abstruse pursuits that generally deaden the mind to worldly wisdom.

They had now approached the strangers, who, however, appeared more rustic clowns, and who pulled off their hats with the wanted obsequence of their tribe.

"Holla, my men," said the squire, assuming his magisterial air, for the mildest squire in Christendom can play the bashaw when he remembers he is a justice of the peace. "Holla! what are you doing here this time of day? You are not after any good, I fear."

"We ax pardon, your honour," said the older clown in the peculiar accent of the country, "but we be come from Grassdale, and be going to work at Squire Nixon's, at Mowhall, on Monday—seas I has a brother living on the green afore this square, we be a going to sleep at his house to-night and spend the Sunday there, your honour."

"Humph! humph! What's your name?"

"Joe W sod, your honour; and this here chap is Wal Hutchings."

"Well, well, go along with you," said the squire, "and mind what you are about—I should not be surprised if you snared one of Squire Nixon's hares by the way."

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"Oh, well and indeed, your honour—"

"Go along, go along," said the squire, and away went the men.

"They seem honest bumpkins enough," observed Lester.

"It would have pleased me better," said Aram, "had the speaker of the two particularised less; and you observed that he seemed eager not to let his companion speak: that is a little suspicious."

"Shall I call them back?" asked the squire.

"Why it is scarcely worth while," said Aram; "perhaps I over-refine. And now I look again at them, they seem really what they affect to be. No, it is useless to molest the poor wretches any more. There is something, Lester, humbling to human pride in a rustic's life. It grates against the heart to think of the tone in which we unconsciously permit ourselves to address him. We see in him humanity in its simple state: it is a sad thought to feel that we despise it; that all we respect in our species is what has been created by art; the gaudy dress, the glittering equipage, or even the cultivated intellect; the mere and naked material of nature we eye with indifference or trample on with disdain. Poor child of toil, from the grey dawn to the setting sun, one long task!—no idea excited—no thought awakened beyond those that suffice to make him the machine of others—the serf of the hard soil. And then, too, mark how we scowl upon his scanty holidays, how we hedge in his mirth with laws, and turn his hilarity into crime! We make the whole of the gay world, wherein we walk and take our pleasure, to him a place of snare and perils. If he leave his labour for an instant, in that instant how many temptations spring up to him! And yet we have no mercy for his errors, the gall—the transport ship—the gallows, those are the illustrations of our lecture—"

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books—those the sounds of every vista that we cut through the labyrinth of our laws. Ah, lie on the disparities of the world! They cripple the heart, they blind the sense, they concentrate the thousand links between man and man, into the two basest of earthly ties—servility and pride. Methinks the devils laugh out when they hear us tell the boar that his soul is as glorious and eternal as our own; and yet when in the grinding drudgery of his life, not a spark of that soul can be called forth; when it sleeps, walled around

in its lumpish clay, from the cradle to the grave, without a dream to stir the deadness of its torpor."

"And yet, Aram," said Lester, "the lords of science have their ill. Exalt the soul as you will, you cannot raise it above pain. Better, perhaps, to let it sleep, since in waking it looks only upon a world of trial."

"You say well, you say well," said Aram, smiting his heart; "and I suffered a foolish sentiment to carry me beyond the sober boundaries of our daily sense."

CHAPTER IV.

MILITARY PREPARATIONS.—THE COMMANDER AND HIS MEN.—ARAM IS PERSUADED TO PASS THE NIGHT AT THE MANOR-HOUSE.

Falstaff.—Did my lieutenant Peto meet me at the town's end. * * * * I pressed me none but such toasts and butter, with hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins' heads.
First Part of King Henry IV.

THEY had scarcely reached the manor-house before the rain, which the clouds had portended throughout the whole day, began to descend in torrents, and, to use the strong expression of the Latin poet, the night rushed down, black and sudden, over the face of the earth.

The new watch were not by any means the hardy and experienced soldiery, by whom rain and darkness are unheeded. They looked with great dismay upon the character of the night in which their campaign was to commence. The valorous Peter, who had sustained his own courage by repeated applications to a little bottle, which he never failed to carry about him in all the more bustling and enterprising occasions of life, endeavoured, but with partial success, to maintain the ardour of his band. Seated in the servants' hall of the manor-house, in a large arm chair,

Jacobina on his knee, and his trusty musket, which, to the great terror of the womankind, had never been uncocked throughout the day, still grasped in his right hand, while the stock was grounded on the floor; he indulged in martial harangues, plentifully interlarded with plagiarisms from the worshipful translations of Messrs. Sternhold and Hopkins, and psalmodic versions of a more doubtful authorship. And when at the hour of ten, which was the appointed time, he led his warlike force, which consisted of six *retics*, armed with sticks of incredible thickness, three guns, one pistol, a broadsword, and a pitch fork (the last a weapon likely to be more effectively used than all the rest put together);—when at the hour of ten he led them up to the room above, where they were to be passed in review before the critical eye of the squire, with Jacobina leading the on-guard,

you could not fancy a prettier picture for a hero in a little way than mine host of The Spotted Dog.

His hat was fastened tight on his brows by a blue pocket handkerchief; he wore a Spencer of a light brown dragoon, a world too loose, above a leather jerkin; his breeches of corduroy were met all of a sudden, half way up the thigh, by a detachment of Hossians, formerly in the service of the corporal, and bought some time since by Peter Deatry to wear when employed in shooting snipes for the squire, to whom he occasionally performed the office of gamekeeper; suspended round his wrist by a bit of black ribbon was his constable's baton; he shouldered his musket gallantly, and he carried his person as erect as if the least deflection from its perpendicularity were to cost him his life. One may judge of the revolution that had taken place in the village, when so peaceable a man as Peter Deatry was thus metamorphosed into a commander-in-chief! The rest of the regiment hung sheepishly back, each trying to get as near to the door, and as far from the ladies, as possible. But Peter having made up his mind that a hero should only look straight forward, did not condescend to turn round to perceive the irregularity of his line. Secure in his own existence, he stood truculently forth, facing the squire, and prepared to receive his plaudits.

Madeline and Aram sat apart at one corner of the hearth, and Ellinor leaned over the chair of the former; the mirth that she struggled to suppress from being audible mantling over her arch face and laughing eyes, while the squire, taking the pipe from his mouth, turned round on his easy chair, and nodded complacently to the little corps and the great commander.

"We are all ready now, your honour," said Peter, in a voice that did not seem to belong to his body.

so big did it sound,—"all hot, all eager."

"Why you yourself are a host, Peter," said Ellinor, with affected gravity; "your sight alone would frighten an army of robbers; who could have thought you could assume so military an air! The corporal himself was never so upright!"

"I have practised my present naittitude all the day, miss," said Peter, proudly; "and I believe I may now say as Mr. Sternhold says or sings, in the twenty-sixth Psalm, verse twelfth,—

My foot is stayed for all essays,
It standeth well and right;
Wherefore to God with I give praise
In all the people's sight!"

Jacobina, behave yourself, child. I don't think, your honour, that we miss the corporal so much as I fancied at first, for we all does very well without him."

"Indeed, you are a most worthy substitute, Peter. And now, Nell, just reach me my hat and cloak. I will set you at your posts; you will have an ugly night of it."

"Very, indeed, your honour," cried all the army, speaking for the first time.

"Silence—order—discipline," said Peter, gruffly. "March!"

But, instead of marching across the hall, the recruits huddled up one after the other, like a flock of geese, whom Jacobina might be supposed to have set in motion, and each scraping to the ladies, as they shuffled, sneaked, bundled, and hustled out at the door.

"We are well guarded now, Madeline," said Ellinor. "I fancy we may go to sleep as safely as if there were not a housebreaker in the world."

"Why," said Madeline, "let us trust they will be more efficient than they seem, though I cannot persuade myself that we shall really need them. One might almost as well conceive a tiger in our arbour, as a robber in

Grassdale. But dear, dear Eugene, do not—do not leave us this night; Walter's room is ready for you, and if it were only to walk across that valley in such weather, it would be cruel to leave us. Let me beseech you; come, you cannot, you dare not, refuse me such a favour."

Aram pleaded his vow, but it was overruled; Madeline proved herself a most exquisite casuist in setting it aside. One by one his objections were broken down; and how, as he gazed into those eyes, could he keep any resolution that Madeline wished him to break? The power she possessed over him seemed exactly in proportion to his impregnability to every one else. The surface on which the diamond cuts its easy way will yield to no more ignoble instrument; it is easy to shatter it, but by only one pure and precious gem can it be shaped. But if Aram remained at the house this night, how could he well avoid a similar compliance the next? And on the next was his interview with Houseman. This reason for resistance yielded to Madeline's soft entreaties; he trusted to the time to furnish him with excuses; and when Lester returned, Madeline, with a triumphant air, informed him that Aram had consented to be their guest for the night.

"Your influence is, indeed, greater than mine," said Lester, wringing his hat as the delicate fingers of Ellnor loosened his cloak; "yet one can scarcely think our friend sacrifices much in concession, after proving the weather without. I should pity our poor patrol most exceedingly, if I were not thoroughly assured that within two hours every one of them will have quietly slunk home; and even Peter himself, when he has exhausted his bottle, will be the first

to set the example. However, I have stationed two of the men near our house, and the rest at equal distances along the village."

"Do you really think they will go home, sir?" said Ellnor, in a little alarm; "why they would be worse than I thought them, if they were driven to bed by the rain. I knew they could not stand a pistol, but a shower, however hard, I did imagine would scarcely quench their valour."

"Never mind, girl," said Lester, gaily chucking her under the chin, "we are quite strong enough now to resist them. You see Madeline has grown as brave as a lioness.—Come, girls, come, let's have supper, and stir up the fire. And, Nell, where are my slippers?"

And thus on the little family scene, the cheerful wood fire flickering against the polished wainscot; the supper-table arranged, the squire drawing his oak chair towards it, Ellnor mixing his negus; and Aram and Madeline, though three times summoned to the table, and having three times answered to the summons, still lingering apart by the hearth—let us drop the curtain.

We have only, ere we close our chapter, to observe, that when Lester conducted Aram to his chamber he placed in his hands an order, payable at the county town, for three hundred pounds. "The rest," he said in a whisper, "is below, where I mentioned; and there, in my secret drawer, it had better rest till the morning."

The good squire then, putting his finger to his lip, hurried away, to avoid the thanks; which, indeed, whatever gratitude he might feel, Aram was ill able to express.

CHAPTER V.

THE SISTERS ALONE.—THE GOSPEL OF LOVE.—AN ALARM, AND AN EVENT.

"*Juliet.* My true love is grown to such excess,
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth."—*Romeo and Juliet.*

"*Eros.* Oh, a man in arms;
His weapon drawn too!"—*The False One.*

It was a custom with the two sisters, when they repaired to their chamber for the night, to sit conversing, sometimes even for hours, before they finally retired to bed. This, indeed, was the usual time for their little confidences, and their mutual dilations over those hopes and plans for the future, which always occupy the larger share of the thoughts and conversation of the young. I do not know any thing in the world more lovely than such conferences between two beings who have no secrets to relate but what arise, all fresh, from the springs of a guileless heart,—those pure and beautiful mysteries of an unclouded nature which warm us to hear; and we think with a sort of wonder when we feel how arid experience has made ourselves, that so much of the dew and sparkle of existence still linger in the nooks and valleys, which are as yet virgin of the sun and of mankind.

The sisters this night were more than commonly indifferent to sleep. Madeline sat by the small but bright hearth of the chamber, in her night dress, and Ellnor, who was much prouder of her sister's beauty than her own, was employed in knotting up the long and lustrous hair which fell in rich luxuriance over Madeline's throat and shoulders.

"There certainly never was such beautiful hair!" said Ellnor, admir-

ingly. "And let me see,—yes,—on Thursday fortnight I may be dressing it, perhaps, for the last time—hugho!"

"Don't flatter yourself that you are so near the end of your troublesome duties," said Madeline, with her pretty smile, which had been much brighter and more frequent of late than it was formerly wont to be; so that Lester had remarked, "That Madeline really appeared to have become the lighter and gayer of the two."

"You will often come to stay with us for weeks together, at least till—till you have a double right to be mistress here. Ah! my poor hair,—you need not pull it so hard."

"Be quiet, then," said Ellnor, half laughing, and wholly blushing.

"Trust me, I have not been in love myself without learning its signs; and I venture to prophesy that within six months you will come to consult me whether or not—for there is a great deal to be said on both sides of the question—you can make up your mind to sacrifice your own wishes and marry Walter Lester. As—gently, gently! Nell——"

"Promise to be quiet."

"I will—I will; but you began it."

As Ellnor now finished her task, and kissed her sister's forehead, she sighed deeply.

"Happy Walter!" said Madeline.

"I was not sighing for Walter, but for you."

"For me!—impossible! I cannot imagine any part of my *future* life that can cost you a sigh. Ah, that I were more worthy of my happiness!"

"Well, then," said Ellnor, "I sighed for myself;—I sighed to think we should so soon be parted, and that the continuance of your society would then depend, not on our mutual love, but on the will of another."

"What, Ellnor, and can you suppose that Eugene,—my Eugene,—would not welcome you as warmly as myself? Ah! you misjudge him; I know you have not yet perceived how tender a heart lies beneath all that melancholy and reserve."

"I feel, indeed," said Ellnor, warmly, "as if it were impossible that one whom you love should not be all that is good and noble: yet if this reserve of his should increase, as is at least possible, with increasing years; if our society should become again, as it once was, distasteful to him, should I not lose you, Madeline?"

"But his reserve cannot increase: do you not perceive how much it is softened already? Ah! be assured that I will charm it away."

"But what is the cause of the melancholy that even now, at times, evidently preys upon him? Has he never revealed it to you?"

"It is merely the early and long habit of solitude and study, Ellnor," replied Madeline: "and shall I own to you, I would scarcely wish *that* away? His tenderness itself seems linked with his melancholy; it is like a sad but gentle music, that brings tears into our eyes, but who would change it for gayer airs?"

"Well, I must own," said Ellnor, reluctantly, "that I no longer wonder at your infatuation; I can no longer chide you as I once did: there is, assuredly, something in his voice, his look, which irresistibly sinks into the

heart. And there are moments when, what with his eyes and forehead, his countenance seems more beautiful, more impressive, than any I ever beheld. Perhaps, too, for you, it is better that your lover should be no longer in the first flush of youth. Your nature seems to require something to venerate as well as to love. And I have ever observed at prayers, that you seem more especially rapt and carried beyond yourself, in those passages which call peculiarly for worship and adoration."

"Yes, dearest," said Madeline, fervently, "I own that Eugene is of all beings, not only of all whom I ever knew but of whom I ever dreamed, or imagined, the one that I am most fitted to love and to appreciate. His wisdom, but, more than that, the lofty tenor of his mind, calls forth all that is highest and best in my own nature. I feel exalted when I listen to him;—and yet, how gentle, with all that nobleness! And to think that *he* should descend to love me, and *so* to love me! It is as if a star were to leave its sphere!"

"Hark! one o'clock," said Ellnor, as the deep voice of the clock told the first hour of morning. "Heavens! how much louder the winds rave! And how the heavy sleet drives against the window! Our poor watch without!—but you may be sure my father was right, and they are safe at home by this time; nor is it likely, I should think, that even robbers would be abroad in such weather!"

"I have heard," said Madeline, "that robbers generally choose these dark stormy nights for their designs; but I confess I don't feel much alarm, and *he* is in the house. Draw nearer to the fire, Ellnor, is it not pleasant to see how serenely it burns, while the storm howls without? It is like my Eugene's soul, luminous and lone amidst the roar and darkness of this unquiet world!"

"There stroke himself," said Ellnor, casting to perceive how invariably women, who love, imitate the tone of the beloved one. And Madeline felt it, and smiled too.

"Hush!" said Ellnor, abruptly; "did you not hear a low, grating noise below? Ah! the winds now prevent your catching the sound. But hush, hush!—the wind pauses,—there it is again!"

"Yes, I hear it," said Madeline, turning pale; "it seems in the little parlour—a continued, harsh but very low noise. Good heavens! it seems at the window below."

"It is like a file," whispered Ellnor, "perhaps——"

"You are right," said Madeline, suddenly rising; "it is a file, and at the bars my father had fixed against the window yesterday. Let us go down and alarm the house."

"No, no; for Heaven's sake, don't be so rash," cried Ellnor, losing all presence of mind. "hark! the sound ceases; there is a louder noise below,—and steps. Let us lock the door."

But Madeline was of that fine and high order of spirit, which rises in proportion to danger, and valuing her sister as well as she could, she seized the light with a steady hand, opened the door, and Ellnor still clinging to her, passed the landing-place, and hastened to her father's room: he slept at the opposite corner of the staircase. Aram's chamber was at the extreme end of the house. Before she reached the door of Lester's apartment, the noise below grew loud and distinct—a scuffle—voices—cries—and now—the sound of a pistol—in a minute more the whole house was stirring. Lester in his night robe, his broad sword in his hand, and his long grey hair floating behind, was the first to appear: the servants, old and young, male and female, now came thronging simultaneously round; and in a general

body, Lester several paces at their head, his daughters following next to him, they rushed to the apartment whence the noise, most suddenly stirred, had proceeded.

The window was opened, evidently by force: an instrument like a wedge was fixed in the bureau containing Lester's money, and seemed to have been left there, as if the person using it had been disturbed before the design for which it was introduced had been accomplished, and (the only evidence of life) Aram stood, dressed, in the centre of the room, a pistol in his left hand, a sword in his right: a bludgeon seared in two lay at his feet, and on the floor within two yards of him, towards the window, drops of blood yet warm, showed that the pistol had not been discharged in vain.

"And is it you, my brave friend, whom I have to thank for our safety?" cried Lester, in great emotion.

"You, Eugene!" repeated Madeline, sinking on his breast.

"But thanks hereafter," continued Lester; "let us now to the pursuit,—perhaps the villain may have perished beneath your bullet!"

"Ha!" muttered Aram, who had hitherto seemed unconscious of all around him; so fixed had been his eye, as colourless his cheek, as motionless his posture. "Ha! say you so?—think you I have slain him?—No, it cannot be—the ball did not slay; I saw him stagger; but he rallied—not so one who receives a mortal wound!—Ha! ha!—there is blood, you say; that is true; but what then?—It is not the first wound that kills; you must strike again.—Pooh, pooh! what is a little blood?"

While he was thus muttering, Lester and the most active of the servants had already sallied through the window; but the night was so intensely dark that they could not see a step beyond them. Lester returned, there

fore, in a few moments; and met Aram's dark eye fixed upon him with an unutterable expression of anxiety.

"You have *found* no one?" said he, "no dying man?—Ha!—well—well—well! they must *both* have escaped; the night must favour them."

"Do you fancy the villain was severely wounded?"

"Not so—I trust not so; he seemed able to——But stop—oh God!—stop! your foot is dabbled in blood—blood shed by *me*,—off! off!"

Lester moved aside with a quick abhorrence, as he saw that his foot were indeed smearing the blood over the polished and slippery surface of the oak boards, and in moving he stumbled against a dark lantern in which the light still burned, and which the robbers in their flight had left.

"Yes," said Aram, observing it, "it was by that, their own light, that I saw them—saw their faces—and—and—(bursting into a loud, wild laugh) they were *both* strangers!"

"Ah, I thought so, I knew so," said Lester, plucking the instrument from the bureau. "I knew they could be no Grassdale men. What did you fancy they could be? But—bless me, Madeline—what ho! help!—Aram, she has fainted at your feet!"

And it was indeed true and remarkable that so utter had been the absorption of Aram's mind, that he had been not only insensible to the entrance of Madeline, but even unconscious that she had thrown herself on his breast. And she, overcome by her feelings, had slid to the ground from that momentary resting-place, in a swoon which Lester, in the general tumult and confusion, was now the first to perceive.

At this exclamation, at the sound of Madeline's name, the blood rushed back from Aram's heart, where it had gathered, icy and curdling; and, awakened thoroughly and at once to

himself, he knelt down, and weaving his arms around her, supported her head on his breast, and called upon her with the most passionate and moving exclamations.

But when the faint bloom returned to her cheek, and her lips stirred, he printed a long kiss on that cheek—on those lips, and surrendered his post to Ellinor, who, blushing, gathering the robe over her startled breast from which it had been slightly drawn, now entreated all, save the women of the house, to withdraw till her sister was restored.

Lester, eager to hear what his guest could relate, therefore took Aram to his own apartment, where the particulars were briefly told.

Suspecting, which indeed was the chief reason that excused him to himself in yielding to Madeline's request, that the men Lester and himself had encountered in their evening walk might be other than they seemed, and that they might have well overheard Lester's communication as to the sum in his house, and the place where it was stored; he had not undressed himself, but kept the door of his room open to listen if any thing stirred. The keen sense of hearing, which we have before remarked him to possess, enabled him to catch the sound of the file at the bars, even before Ellinor, notwithstanding the distance of his own chamber from the place, and seizing the sword which had been left in his room (the pistol was his own), he had descended to the room below.

"What?" said Lester, "and without a light?"

"The darkness is familiar to me," said Aram. "I could walk by the edge of a precipice in the darkest night without one false step, if I had but once passed it before. I did not gain the room, however, till the window had been forced; and by the light of a dark lantern which one of them

held. I perceived two men standing by the bureau—the rest you can imagine; my victory was easy, for the blood-stain, which one of them aimed at me, gave way at once to the edge of your good sword, and my pistol delivered me of the other.—There ends the history.”

Lester overwhelmed him with thanks and praises, but Aram, glad to escape them, hurried away to see after Madeline, whom he now met on the landing-place, leaning on Ellmore’s arm, and still pale.

She gave him her hand, which he for one moment pressed passionately to his lips, but dropped the next, with an altered and chilled air. And hastily observing that he would not now detain her from a rest which she must so much require, he turned away

and descended the stairs. Some of the servants were grouped around the place of encounter; he entered the room, and again started at the sight of the blood.

“Bring water,” said he, fiercely; “will you let the stagnant gore ooze and rot into the boards, to startle the eye and sully the heart with its filthy and unutterable stain?—Water, I say! water!”

They hurried to obey him, and Lester coming into the room to see the window resealed by the help of boards, &c., found the student bending over the servants as they performed their reluctant task, and raving them with a raised and harsh voice for the hastiness with which he accused them of seeking to slur it over.

CHAPTER VI.

ARAM ALONE AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—HIS SOLILOQUY AND PROJECT.—SCENE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MADELINE.

“*Luce non erat Å frater;*
Trepidante semper corde, non mortis metu
Sed *————— “—*Seneca: Octavia, Act I.*

THE two men-servants of the house remained up the rest of the night; but it was not till the morning had advanced far beyond the usual time of rising in the fresh shades of Grassdale, that Madeline and Ellmore became visible, even Lester left his bed an hour later than his wont; and knocking at Aram’s door, found the student was already abroad, while it was evident that his bed had not been pressed during the whole of the night. Lester

descended into the garden, and was there met by Peter Dealtry and a detachment of the band; who, as common sense and Lester had predicted, were indeed, at a very early period of the watch, driven to their respective homes. They were now seriously concerned for their unmanliness, which they passed off as well as they could upon their conviction “that nobody at Grassdale could ever really be robbed;” and promised, with sincere contrition, that they would be most excellent guards for the future. Peter was, in sooth, singularly chaf-fallen, and could only defend himself

* *I live a life of wretchedness; my heart perpetually trembling, and through fear of death, but ———*

by an impatient manner, from which the squire turned somewhat impatiently when he heard, louder than the rest, the words "seventy seventh psalm, seventeenth verse,—"

"The clouds that were both thick and black,
Did rain full plentifully."

Leaving the squire to the edification of the pious host, let us follow the steps of Aram, who at the early dawn had quitted his sleepless chamber, and though the clouds at that time still poured down in a dull and heavy sleet, wandered away, whither he neither knew nor heeded. He was now hurrying, with unabated speed, though with no purposed bourne or object, over the chain of mountains that backed the green and lovely valleys among which his home was cast.

"Yes!" said he, at last halting abruptly, with a desperate resolution stamped on his countenance, "yes! I will so determine. If, after this interview, I feel that I cannot command and bind Houseman's perpetual secrecy, I will surrender Madeline at once. She has loved me generously and trustingly. I will not link her life with one that may be called hence in any hour, and to so dread an account. Neither shall the grey hairs of Lester be brought, with the sorrow of my shame, to a dishonoured and untimely grave. And after the outrage of last night, the daring outrage, how can I calculate on the safety of a day? Though Houseman was not present, though I can scarce believe he *knew* or at least abetted the attack, yet they were assuredly of his gang: had one been seized, the clue might have traced to his detection—were he detected, what should I have to dread? No, Madeline! no; not while this sword hangs over me will I subject *thee* to share the horror of my fate!"

This resolution, which was certainly generous, and yet no more than honest,

Aram had no sooner arrived at, than he dismissed, at once, by one of those efforts which powerful minds can command, all the weak and vacillating thoughts that might interfere with the sternness of his determination. He seemed to breathe more freely, and the haggard wanness of his brow relaxed at least from the workings that, but the moment before, distorted its wonted serenity with a maniac wildness.

He now pursued his desultory way with a calmer step.

"What a night!" said he, again breaking into the low murmur in which he was accustomed to hold commune with himself. "Had Houseman been one of the ruffians a shot might have freed me, and without a crime, for ever; and till the light flashed on their brows, I thought the smaller man bore his aspect. Ha! out, tempting thought! out on thee!" he cried aloud, and stamping with his foot; then recalled by his own vehemence, he cast a jealous and hurried glance round him, though at that moment his step was on the very height of the mountains, where not even the solitary shepherd, save in search of some more daring straggler of the flock, ever brushed the dew from the cragged, yet fragrant soil. "Yet," he said, in a lower voice, and again sinking into the sombre depths of his reverie, "It *is* a tempting, a wondrously tempting thought. And it struck athwart me like a flash of lightning when this hand was at his throat—a tighter strain, another moment, and Eugene Aram had not had an enemy, a witness against him left in the world. Ha! are the dead no foes then? are the dead no witnesses?" Here he relapsed into utter silence, but his gestures continued wild, and his eyes wandered round, with a blood-shot and unquiet glare. "Enough," at length he said calmly; and with the manner of one *'who has rolled a stone*

from his heart ; " " Enough ! I will not so easily myself ; unless all other hope of self-preservation be extinct. And why despond ? the plan I have thought of seems well laid, wise, consummate at all points. Let me consider—fortified the moment he re-enters England—not given till he has left it—paid periodically, and of such extent as to supply his wants, preserve him from crime, and forbid the possibility of extorting more : all this sounds well ; and if not feasible at last, why farewell Madeline, and I myself leave this land for ever. Come what will to me—death in its vilest shape—let not the stroke fall on that breast. And if it be," he continued, his face lighting up, " if it be, as it may yet, that I can chain this hell hound, why, even then the instant that Madeline is mine I will fly these scenes ; I will seek a yet obscurer and remoter corner of earth : I will choose another name—Fool ! why did I not so before ! But matters it ? What is writ is writ. Who can struggle with the invisible and giant hand that launched the world itself into motion ; and at whose pre-decree we hold the dark boons of life and death ! "

It was not till evening that Aram, utterly worn out and exhausted, found himself in the neighbourhood of Lester's house. The sun had only broken forth at its setting, and it now glittered, from its western pyre, over the dripping hedges, and spread a brief but magic glow along the rich landscape around ; the changing woods clad in the thousand dyes of autumn ; the scattered and peaceful cottages, with their long wreaths of smoke curling upward, and the grey and venerable walls of the manor-house, with the church hard by, and the delicate spire, which, mixing itself with heaven, is at once the most touching and solemn emblem of the

faith to which it is devoted. It was a Sabbath eve ; and from the spot on which Aram stood, he might discern many a rustic train trooping slowly up the green village lane towards the church ; and the deep bell which summoned to the last service of the day now swung its voice far over the sunlit and tranquil scene.

But it was not the setting sun, nor the autumnal landscape, nor the voice of the holy bell, that now arrested the step of Aram. At a little distance before him, leaning over a gate, and seemingly waiting till the ceasing of the bell should announce the time to enter the sacred mansion, he beheld the figure of Madeline Lester. Her head, at the moment, was averted from him, as if she were looking after Ellinor and her uncle, who were in the churchyard among a little group of their homely neighbours ; and he was half in doubt whether to shun her presence, when she suddenly turned round, and, seeing him, uttered an exclamation of joy. It was now too late for avoidance ; and calling to his aid that mastery over his features which, in ordinary times, few more eminently possessed, he approached his beautiful mistress with a smile as serene, if not as glowing, as her own. But she had already opened the gate, and bounding forward, met him half way.

" Ah, truant, truant," said she ; " the whole day absent, without inquiry or farewell ! After this, when shall I believe that thou really lovest me ! "

" But," continued Madeline, gazing on his countenance, which bore witness, in its present languor, to the fierce emotions which had lately raged within, " but, heavens ! dearest, how pale you look ; you are fatigued ; give me your hand, Eugene.—It is parched and dry.—Come into the house, —you must need rest and refreshment."

" I am better here, my Madeline,—

the air and the sun revive me : let us rest by the stile yonder. But you were going to church, and the bell has ceased."

"I could attend, I fear, little to the prayers now," said Madeline, "unless you feel well enough, and will come to church with me."

"To church!" said Aram, with a half shudder. "No; my thoughts are in no mood for prayer."

"Then you shall give your thoughts to me, and I, in return, will pray for you before I rest."

And so saying, Madeline, with her usual innocent frankness of manner, wound her arm in his, and they walked onward towards the stile Aram had pointed out. It was a little rustic stile, with chestnut-trees hanging over it on either side. It stands to this day, and I have pleased myself with finding Walter Lester's initials, and Madeline's also, with the date of the year, carved in half-worn letters on the wood, probably by the hand of the former.

They now rested at this spot. All around them was still and solitary; the groups of peasants had entered the church, and nothing of life, save the cattle grazing in the distant fields, or the thrush starting from the wet bushes, was visible. The winds were lulled to rest, and, though somewhat of the chill of autumn floated on the air, it only bore a balm to the harassed brow and fevered veins of the student; and Madeline!—*she* felt nothing but his presence. It was exactly what we picture to ourselves of a Sabbath eve, unutterably serene and soft, and borrowing from the very melancholy of the declining year an impressive yet a mild solemnity.

There are seasons, often in the most dark or turbulent periods of our life, when (why, we know not) we are suddenly called from ourselves, by the remembrances of early childhood; something touches the electric chain,

and, lo! a host of shadowy and sweet recollections steal upon us. The wheel rests, the oar is suspended, we are snatched from the labour and travail of present life; we are born again, and live anew. As the secret page in which the characters once written seem for ever effaced, but which, if breathed upon, gives them again into view; so the memory can revive the images invisible for years; but while we gaze, the breath recedes from the surface, and all one moment so vivid, with the next moment has become once more a blank!

"It is singular," said Aram, "but often as I have paused at this spot, and gazed upon this landscape, a likeness to the scenes of my childish life, which it now seems to me to present, never occurred to me before. Yes, yonder, in that cottage, with the sycamores in front, and the orchard extending behind, till its boundary, as we now stand, seems lost among the woodland, I could fancy that I looked upon my father's home. The clump of trees that lies yonder to the right could cheat me readily to the belief that I saw the little grove, in which, enamoured with the first passion of study, I was wont to pore over the thrice read book through the long summer days;—a boy—a thoughtful boy; yet, oh, how happy! What worlds appeared then to me to open in every page! how exhaustless I thought the treasures and the hopes of life! and beautiful on the mountain tops seemed to me the steps of Knowledge! I did not dream of all that the musing and lonely passion that I nursed was to entail upon me. There, in the clefts of the valley, on the ridges of the hill, or by the fragrant course of the stream, I began already to win its history from the herb or flower; I saw nothing, that I did not long to unravel its secrets; all that the earth nourished ministered to one desire:—and what of low or sordid did

there nuzzle with that desire? The petty avarice, the mean ambition, the degrading love, even the heat, the anger, the fickleness, the caprice of other men, did they allure or bow down my nature from its steep and solitary eyrie? I lived but to feed my mind; wisdom was my thirst, my dream, my absent, my sole fount and sustenance of life. And have I not seen the wind and reaped the whirlwind? The glory of my youth is gone, my veins are chilled, my frame is bowed, my heart is gnawed with cares, my nerves are unstrung as a loosened bow, and what, after all, is my gain? Oh, God! what is my gain?"

"Eugene, dear, dear Eugene!" murmured Madeline soothingly, and wadding with her tears, "is not your gain great? is it not triumph that you stand, while yet young, almost alone in the world, for success in all that you have attempted?"

"And what," exclaimed Aram, breaking in upon her, "what is this world which we ransack but a stupendous charnel house? Everything that we deem most lovely, ask its origin—Daisy! When we rifle nature, and collect wisdom, are we not like the hags of old, culling simples from the rank grave, and extracting essences from the rotting bones of the dead? Everything around us is fathered by corruption, hatched by corruption, and into corruption returns at last. Corruption is at once the womb and grave of Nature, and the very beauty on which we gaze,—the cloud, and the tree, and the swarming waters,—all are one vast panorama of death! But it did not always seem to me thus; and even now I speak with a heated pulse and a dizzy brain. Come, Madeline, let us change the theme."

And dismissing at once from his language, and perhaps, as he proceeded, also from his mind, all of its

former gloom, except such as might shade, but not enlatter, the natural tenderness of remembrance, Aram now related, with that vividness of diction, which, though we feel we can very inadequately convey its effect, characterised his conversation, and gave something of poetic interest to all he uttered, those reminiscences which belong to childhood, and which all of us take delight to hear from the lips of one we love.

It was while on this theme that the lights which the deepening twilight had now made necessary became visible in the church, streaming afar through its large oriel window, and brightening the dark firs that overshadowed the graves around: and just at that moment the organ (a gift from a rich rector, and the boast of the neighbouring country), stole upon the silence with its swelling and solemn note. There was something in the strain of this sudden music that was so kindred with the holy repose of the scene,—chimed so exactly to the chord now vibrating in Aram's mind, that it struck upon him at once with an irresistible power. He paused abruptly "as if an angel spoke!" That sound, so peculiarly adapted to express sacred and unearthly emotion, none who have ever mourned or sinned can hear, at an unlooked-for moment, without a certain sentiment that either subdues, or elevates, or awes. But he,—he was a boy once more! he was again in the village church of his native place: his father, with his silver hair, stood again beside him; there was his mother, pointing to him the holy verse; there the half-arch, half-reverent face of his little sister (she died young),—there the upward eye and hushed countenance of the preacher who had first raised his mind to knowledge, and supplied its food, all, all lived, moved, breathed, again before him, all, as when he was

young and gallant, and at peace; hope and the future one word!

He bowed his head lower and lower; the hardness and hypocrisies of pride, the sense of danger and of horror, that, in agitating, still supported, the mind of this resolute and scheming man, at once forsook him. Madeline felt his tears drop fast and

burning on her hand, and the next moment, overcome by the relief it afforded to a heart preyed upon by fiery and dread secrets, which it could not reveal, and a frame exhausted by the long and extreme tension of all its powers, he laid his head upon that faithful bosom, and wept aloud.

CHAPTER VII.

ARAM'S SECRET EXPEDITION. — A SCENE WORTHY THE ACTORS. — ARAM'S ADDRESS AND POWERS OF PERSUASION OR HYPOCRISY. — THEIR RESULT. — A FEARFUL NIGHT. — ARAM'S SOLITARY RIDE HOMEWARD. — WHOM HE MEETS BY THE WAY, AND WHAT HE SEES.

Macbeth. Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead.

* * * *

Donalbain. Our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer.

* * * *

Old Man. Hours dreadful, and things strange."—*Macbeth.*

"And you must really go to * * * *, to pay your importunate creditor this very evening! Sunday is a bad day for such matters; but as you pay him by an order, it does not much signify; and I can well understand your impatience to feel relieved from the debt. But it is already late; and if it must be so, you had better start."

"True," said Aram, to the above remark of Lester's, as the two stood together without the door; "but do you feel quite secure and guarded against any renewed attack?"

"Why, unless they bring a regiment, yes! I have put a body of our patrol on a service where they can scarce be inefficient, viz., I have stationed them in the house instead of without; and I shall myself bear them company through the greater part of the night: to-morrow I shall remove all that I possess of value to

* * * * (the county town) including those unlucky guineas, which you will not ease me of."

"The order you have kindly given me will amply satisfy my purpose," answered Aram. "And so there has been no clue to these robberies discovered throughout the day!"

"None: to-morrow, the magistrates are to meet at * * * *, and concert measures: it is absolutely impossible but that we should detect the villains in a few days, viz. if they remain in these parts. I hope to heaven you will not meet them this evening."

"I shall go well armed," answered Aram, "and the horse you lend me is fleet and strong. And now farewell for the present. I shall probably not return to Grassdale this night, or if I do, it will be at so late an hour, that I shall seek my own domicile without disturbing you."

"No, no, you had better remain in the south and not return till morning," said the squire. "And now let us come to the stables."

To eliminate all chance of suspicion as to the real place of his destination, Aram deliberately rode to the town he had mentioned, as the one in which his pretended creditor expected him. He put up at an inn, walked forth as if to visit some one in the town, returned, remounted, and by a circuitous route came into the neighbourhood of the place in which he was to meet Hesterman: then turning into a long and dense chain of wood, he fastened his horse to a tree, and looking to the priming of his pistols, which he carried under his riding cloak, proceeded to the spot on foot.

The night was still, and not wholly dark, for the clouds lay scattered though dense, and suffered many stars to gleam through the heavy air; the moon herself was abroad, but on her decline, and looked forth with a wan and exhausted aspect as she travelled from cloud to cloud. It has been the summary source of our narrative, to portray Aram more often in his weaker moments than, to give an exact notion of his character, we could have altogether wished; but whenever he stood in the actual presence of danger, his whole soul was in arms to cope with it worthily: courage, sagacity, even cunning all awakened to the encounter; and the mind which his life had so austere cultivated repaid him in the urgent season with its acute address and unswerving hardness. The Devil's Crag, as it was popularly called, was a spot consecrated by many a wild tradition, which could not, perhaps, be wholly out of character with the dark thread of his tale, did the rapidity of our narrative allow us to relate them.

The same stream which lent so soft an attraction to the valleys of Grimsdale here assumed a different character;

broad, black, and rushing, it whirled along a course, overhung by shagged and abrupt banks. On the opposite side to that by which Aram now pursued his path, an almost perpendicular mountain was covered with gigantic pine and fir that might have reminded a German wanderer of the darkest recesses of the Hartz; and seemed, indeed, no unworthy haunt for the wild huntsman or the forest fiend. Over this wood the moon now shimmered, with the pale and feeble light we have already described; and only threw into a more sombre shade the motionless and gloomy foliage. Of all the offspring of the forest, the fir bears, perhaps, the most saddening and desolate aspect. Its long branches, without absolute leaf or blossom; its dead, dark, eternal hue, which the winter seems to wither not, nor the spring to revive, have I know not what of a mystic and unnatural life. Around all woodland, there is that *horror umbrarum** which becomes more solemn and awful amidst the silence and depth of night; but this is yet more especially the characteristic of that sullen evergreen. Perhaps, too, this effect is increased by the sterile and dreary soil on which, when in groves, it is generally found; and its very hardness, the very pertinacity with which it draws its strange unfluctuating life, from the sternest wastes and most reluctant strata, enhance, unconsciously, the unwelcome effect it is calculated to create upon the mind. At this place, too, the waters that dashed beneath gave yet additional wildness to the rank verdure of the wood, and contributed, by their rushing darkness partially broken by the stars and the hoarse roar of their shufled courses, a yet more grim and savage sublimity to the scene.

Winding a narrow path (for the whole country was as familiar as a

* Shadowy horror.

garden to his footsteps, that led through the tall wet herbage, almost along the perilous brink of the stream, Aram was now aware, by the increased and deafening sound of the waters, that the appointed spot was nearly gained; and presently the glimmering and imperfect light of the skies revealed the dim shape of a gigantic rock, that rose abruptly from the middle of the stream; and which, rude, barren, vast, as it really was, seemed now, by the uncertainty of night, like some monstrous and deformed creature of the waters suddenly emerging from their vexed and dreary depths. This was the far-famed Crag, which had borrowed from tradition its evil and ominous name. And now, the stream, lending round with a broad and sudden swoop, showed at a little distance, ghostly and indistinct through the darkness, the mighty Waterfall, whose roar had been his guide. Only in one streak a-down the giant cataract the stars were reflected; and this long train of broken light glittered preternaturally forth through the rugged crags and sombre verdure, that wrapped either side of the waterfall in utter and rayless gloom.

Nothing could exceed the forlorn and terrific grandeur of the spot; the roar of the waters supplied to the ear what the night forbade to the eye. Incessant and eternal they thundered down into the gulf; and then shooting over that fearful basin, and forming another, but a mimic fall, dashed on, till they were opposed by the sullen and abrupt crag below; and besieging its base with a renewed roar, sent their foamy and angry spray half way up the hear ascent.

At this stern and dreary spot, well suited for such conferences as Aram and Houseman alone could hold; and which, whatever was the original secret that linked the two men thus strangely, seemed of necessity to partake of a desperate and lawless character, with

danger for its main topic, and death itself for its colouring, Aram now paused, and with an eye accustomed to the darkness, looked around for his companion.

He did not wait long: from the profound shadow that girded the space immediately around the fall, Houseman emerged and joined the student. The stunning noise of the cataract in the place where they met, forbade any attempt to converse; and they walked on by the course of the stream, to gain a spot less in reach of the deafening shout of the mountain giant as he rushed with his banded waters upon the valley like a foe.

It was noticeable that as they proceeded, Aram walked on with an unassuming and careless demeanour; but Houseman pointing out the way with his hand, not leading it, kept a little behind Aram, and watched his motions with a vigilant and wary eye. The student, who had diverged from the path at Houseman's direction, now paused at a place where the matted bushes seemed to forbid any farther progress; and said, for the first time breaking the silence, "We cannot proceed; shall this be the place of our conference?"

"No," said Houseman, "we had better pierce the bushes. I know the way, but will not lead it."

"And wherefore?"

"The mark of your gripe is still on my throat," replied Houseman, significantly: "you know as well as I, that it is not always safe to have a friend lagging behind."

"Let us rest here, then," said Aram, calmly, the darkness veiling any alteration of his countenance, which his comrade's suspicion might have created.

"Yet it were much better," said Houseman, doubtfully, "could we gain the cave below."

"The cave!" said Aram, starting, as if the word had a sound of fear.

"Ay, ay: but not St. Robert's,"

said Houseman; and the grin of his teeth was visible through the darkness of the shade. "But come, give me your hand, and I will venture to conduct you through the thicket—that is your left hand," observed Houseman, with a sharp and angry suspicion in his tone, "give me the right."

"As you will," said Aram, in a subdued, yet menacing voice, that seemed to come from his heart, and thrust, for an instant, to the house of him who heard it, "as you will; but for fourteen years I have not given this right hand, in pledge of fellowship, to living man; you alone deserve the courtesy, then."

Houseman hesitated before he took the hand now extended to him.

"Peace!" said he, as if indignant at himself, "what scruples at a shadow! Come" grasping the hand, "that's well—so, so; now we are in the thicket—tread firm—this way—best," continued Houseman, under his breath, as suspicion again seemed to cross him, "hold! we can see each other's face not even dimly now; but in this hand, my right is free, I have a knife that has done good service ere this; and if I do but suspect that you are about to play me false, I bury it in your heart. Do you lead me?"

"Lead!" said Aram, scornfully, "I should dread you dead yet more than living."

Houseman made no answer; but continued to grope on through the path in the thicket, which he evidently knew well, though even in daylight, so thick were the trees, and so artfully had their boughs been left to cover the track, no path could have been discovered by one unacquainted with the place.

They had now walked on for some minutes, and of late their steps had been sounding a regular, and somewhat monotonous cadence: all this while, the pulse of the hand Houseman held, beat with as steadfast and

calm a throb, as in the most quiet mood of learned meditation; although Aram could not but be conscious that a mere accident, a slip of the foot, an entanglement in the briars, might awaken the irritable fears of his ruthless comrade, and bring the knife to his breast. But this was not that form of death that could shake the nerves of Aram; nor, though animating his whole soul to ward off one danger, was he well sensible of another, that might have seemed equally near and probable, to a less collected and energetic nature. Houseman now halted, again put aside the boughs, proceeded a few steps, and by a certain dampness and oppression in the air, Aram rightly conjectured himself in the cavern Houseman had spoken of.

"We are landed now," said Houseman, "but wait, I will strike a light. I do not love darkness, even with an other sort of companion than the one I have now the honour to entertain!"

In a few moments a light was produced, and placed aloft on a crag in the cavern; but the ray it gave was feeble and dull, and left all, beyond the immediate spot in which they stood, in a darkness little less Chimerian than before.

"Fare God, it is cold," said Houseman, shivering; "but I have taken care, you see, to provide for a friend's comfort." So saying, he approached a bundle of dry sticks and leaves, piled at one corner of the cave, applied the light to the fuel, and presently the fire rose crackling, breaking into a thousand sparks, and freeing itself gradually from the clouds of smoke in which it was enveloped. It now mounted into a ruddy and cheering flame, and the warm glow played patternedly upon the grey sides of the cavern, which was of a regular shape, and small dimensions, and cast its reddening light over the forms of the two men.

Houseman stood close to the flame,

spreading his hands over it and a sort of grim compacency standing along features singularly ill-favoured, and stunted in their expression, as he felt the animal luxury of the warmth.

Across his middle was a broad leathern belt, containing a brace of large horse pistols, and the knife, or rather dagger, with which he had named Aram—an instrument sharp and on both sides, and nearly a foot in length. Altogether, what with his muscular breadth of figure, his hard and rugged features, his weapons, and a certain reckless, bravo air which indescribably marked his attitude and bearing, it was not well possible to imagine a fitter habitation for that grim cave, or one from whom men of peace, like Eugene Aram, might have seemed to derive more reasonable cause of alarm.

The scholar stood at a little distance, waiting till his companion was entirely prepared for the conference, and his pale and lofty features, hushed in their usual deep, but at such a moment almost preternatural, repose. He stood leaning with folded arms against the rude wall; the light reflected upon his dark garments, with the graceful riding-cloak of the day half falling from his shoulder, and revealing also the pistols in his belt, and the sword which, though commonly worn at that time by all pretending to superiority above the lower and trading orders, Aram usually waived as a distinction, but now carried as a defence. And nothing could be more striking than the contrast between the ruffian form of his companion and the delicate and chiselled beauty of the student's features, with their air of mournful intelligence and serene command and the slender, though nervous symmetry of his frame.

"Houseman," said Aram, now advancing, as his comrade turned his face from the flame towards

him: "before we enter on the main subject of our proposed commerce, tell me, were you engaged in the attempt last night upon Lester's house?"

"By the fiend, no!" answered Houseman; "nor did I learn it till this morning: it was unpremeditated till within a few hours of the time, by the two fools who alone planned it. The fact is, that I myself and the greater part of our little band were engaged some miles off, in the western part of the county. Two—our general spies,—had been, of their own accord, into your neighbourhood, to reconnoitre. They marked Lester's house during the day, and gathered from unsuspected inquiry in the village, for they were dressed as mere country chaps, several particulars which induced them to think the house contained what might repay the trouble of breaking into it. And walking along the fields, they overheard the good master of the house tell one of his neighbours of a large sum at home; nay, even describe the place where it was kept: that determined them;—they feared that the sum might be removed the next day: they had noted the house sufficiently to profit by the description given: they determined, then, of themselves, for it was too late to reckon on our assistance, to break into the room in which the money was kept—though from the aroused vigilance of the frightened hamlet and the force within the house, they resolved to attempt no further booty. They reckoned on the violence of the storm, and the darkness of the night, to prevent their being heard or seen: they were mistaken—the house was alarmed, they were no sooner in the luckless room, than——"

"Well, I know the rest. Was the one wounded dangerously hurt?"

"Oh, he will recover—he will recover; our men are no chickens. But I own I thought it natural that

you might suspect me of sharing in the attack; and though, as I have said before, I do not love you, I have no wish to embroil matters so far as an outrage on the house of your father-in-law might be reasonably expected to do,—at all events, while the gate to an amicable compromise between us is still open.”

“I am satisfied on this head,” said Aram, “and I can now treat with you in a spirit of less distrustful presumption than before. I tell you, Houseman, that the terms are no longer at your control; you must leave this part of the country, and that forthwith, or you inevitably perish. The whole population is alarmed, and the most vigilant of the London police have been already sent for. Life is sweet to you, as to us all, and I cannot imagine you so mad as to incur, not the risk, but the certainty, of losing it. You can no longer, therefore, hold the throat of your presence over my head. Besides, were you able to do so, I at least have the power, which you mean to have forgotten, of freeing myself from it. Am I chained to yonder valleys? Have I not the facility of quitting them at any moment? I will, if of seeking a hiding-place which might baffle, not only your vigilance to discover me, but that of the law! True, my approaching marriage puts some clog upon my wing; but you know that I, of all men, am not likely to be the slave of passion. And what ties are strong enough to arrest the steps of him who flies from a fearful death? Am I using sophistry here, Houseman? Have I not reason on my side?”

“What you say is true enough,” said Houseman, reluctantly; “I do not gainsay it. But I know you have not sought me, in this spot, and at this hour, for the purpose of doing me any wrong; the desire of compromise alone can have brought you hither.”

“You speak well,” said Aram, pre-

serving the admirable coolness of his manner; and continuing the deep and sagacious hypocrisy by which he sought to baffle the dogged covetousness and keen sense of interest with which he had to contend. “It is not easy for either of us to deceive the other. We are men, whose perception a life of danger has sharpened upon all points; I speak to you frankly, for disguise is unavailing. Though I can fly from your reach,—though I can desert my present home and my intended bride,—I would fain think I have free and secure choice to preserve that exact path and scene of life which I have chalked out for myself: I would fain be rid of all apprehension from you. There are two ways only by which this security can be won; the first is through your death;—nay, start not, nor put your hand on your pistol; you have not now cause to fear me. Had I chosen that method of escape, I could have effected it long since: when months ago, you slept under my roof,—ay, *asleep*,—what should have hindered me from stabbing you during the slumber? Two nights since, when my blood was up, and the fury upon me, what should have prevented me tightening the grasp that you so resent, and laying you breathless at my feet? Nay, now, though you keep your eye fixed on my motions, and your hand upon your weapon, you would be no match for a desperate and resolved man, who might as well perish in conflict with you as by the protracted accomplishment of your threats. Your ball *might* fail—even now I see your hand tremble—mine, if I so will it, is certain death. No, Houseman, it would be as vain for your eye to scan the dark pool into whose breast you earnest casts its waters, as for your intellect to pierce the depths of my mind and motives. Your murder, though in self-defence, would lay a weight upon my soul, which would

sink it for ever. I should see, in your death, new chances of detection spread themselves before me; the terrors of the dead are not to be bought or awed into silence; I should pass from one peril into another; and the law's dread vengeance might fall upon me, through the last peril, even yet more surely than through the first. Be composed, then, on this point! From my hand, unless you urge it madly upon yourself, you are wholly safe. Let us turn to my second method of attaining security. It lies, not in your momentary cessation from persecutions; not in your absence from this spot alone; you must quit the country—you must never return to it—your home must be cast, and your very grave dug, in a foreign soil. Are you prepared for this? If not, I can say no more; and I again cast myself passive into the arms of fate."

"You ask," said Houseman, whose fears were allayed by Aram's address, though, at the same time, his dissolute and desperate nature was subdued and tamed in spite of himself, by the very composure of the loftier mind with which it was brought in contact:—"you ask," said he, "no trifling favour of a man—to desert his country for ever; but I am no dreamer, that I should love one spot better than another. I might, perhaps, prefer a foreign clime, as the safer and the freer from old recollections, if I could live in it as a man who loves the relish of life should do. Show me the advantages I am to gain by exile, and farewell to the pale cliffs of England for ever!"

"Your demand is just," answered Aram. "Listen, then. I am willing to coin all my poor wealth, save alone the barest pittance wherewith to sustain life; nay, more, I am prepared also to melt down the whole of my possible expectations from others, into the form of an annuity to yourself. But mark, it will be taken out

of my hands, so that you can have no power over me to alter the conditions with which it will be saddled. It will be so vested that it shall commence the moment you touch a foreign clime; and wholly and for ever cease the moment you set foot on any part of English ground; or, mark also, at the moment of my death. I shall then know that no further hope from me can induce you to risk this income; for, as I shall have spent my all in attaining it, you cannot even meditate the design of extorting more. I shall know that you will not menace my life; for my death would be the destruction of your fortune. We shall live thus separate and secure from each other; you will have only cause to hope for my safety; and I shall have no reason to shudder at your pursuits. It is true, that one source of fear might exist for me still—namely, that in dying you should enjoy the fruitless vengeance of criminalising me. But this chance I must patiently endure; you, if older, are more robust and hardy than myself—your life will probably be longer than mine; and, even were it otherwise, why should we destroy one another? I will solemnly swear to respect your secret at my death-bed; why not on your part? I say not swear, but resolve to respect mine? We cannot love one another; but why hate with a gratuitous and demon vengeance? No, Houseman, however circumstances may have darkened or steeled your heart, it is touched with humanity yet: you will owe to me the bread of a secure and easy existence—you will feel that I have stripped myself, even to penury, to purchase the comforts I cheerfully resign to you—you will remember that, instead of the sacrifices enjoined by this alternative, I might have sought only to counteract your threats, by attempting a life that you strove to make a snare and torture to my own. You will remember this; and

you will not grudge me the austere and gloomy solitude in which I seek to forget, or the one solace with which I, perhaps vainly, endeavour to cheer my passage to a quiet grave. No, Houseman, no; dislike, hate, mistreat me as you will, I still feel I shall have no cause to dread the mere wantonness of your revenge."

Those words, aided by a tone of voice and an expression of countenance that gave them, perhaps their chief effect, took even the hardened nature of Houseman by surprise; he was affected by an emotion which he could not have believed it possible the man who till then had galled him by the humiliating sense of inferiority could have created. He extended his hand to Aram.

"By —," he exclaimed, with an oath which we spare the reader; "you are right! you have made me as helpless in your hands as an infant. I accept your offer—if I were to refuse it, I should be driven to the same courses I now pursue. But look you, I know not what may be the amount of the annuity you can raise. I shall not, however, require more than will satisfy my wants; which, if not so exactly as your own, are not at least very extravagant or very refined. As for the rest, if there be any surplus, in God's name keep it for yourself, and rest assured that, so far as I am concerned, you shall be molested no more."

"No, Houseman," said Aram, with a half smile, "you shall have all I first mentioned; that is, all beyond what course—never honourably and fully, Man's best resolutions are weak if you know I possessed ought to spare, a formal want, a momentary extravagance might tempt you to demand it. Let us put ourselves beyond the possible reach of temptation. But do not flatter yourself by the hope that the promise will be unperformed. My own anxiety is but trifling, and the

half of the dowry I expect from my future father-in-law is all that I can at present obtain. The whole of that dowry is insignificant as a sum. But if this does not suffice for you, I must beg or borrow elsewhere."

"This, after all, is a pleasanter way of settling business," said Houseman, "than by threats and anger. And now I will tell you exactly the sum on which, if I could receive it yearly, I could live without looking beyond the pale of the law for more—on which I could cheerfully renounce England, and commence 'the honest man.' But then, hark you, I must have half settled on my little daughter."

"What! have you a child?" said Aram, eagerly, and well pleased to find an additional security for his own safety.

"Ay, a little girl—my only one—in her eighth year. She lives with her grandmother, for she is motherless; and that girl must not be left quite destitute should I be summoned hence before my time. Some twelve years hence—as poor Jane promises to be pretty—she may be married off my hands; but her childhood must not be exposed to the chances of beggary or shame."

"Doubtless not, doubtless not. Who shall say now that we ever outlive feeling!" said Aram. "Half the annuity shall be settled upon her, should she survive you; but on the same condition, ceasing when I die, or the instant of your return to England. And now, name the sum that you deem sufficient."

"Why," said Houseman, counting on his fingers, and muttering, "twenty—fifty—what and the creature cheap abroad—hundred for living, and half as much for pleasure. Come, Aram, one hundred and fifty guineas per annum, English money, will do for a foreign life—you see I am easily satisfied."

"Be it so," said Aram; "I will engage, by one means or another, to obtain what you ask. For this purpose I shall set out for London to-morrow. I will not lose a moment in seeing the necessary settlement made as we have specified. But, meanwhile, you must engage to leave this neighbourhood, and, if possible, cause your comrades to do the same; although you will not hesitate, for the sake of your own safety, immediately to separate from them."

"Now that we are on good terms," replied Houseman, "I will not scruple to oblige you in these particulars. My comrades *intend* to quit the country before to-morrow; nay, half are already gone: by daybreak I myself will be some miles hence, and separated from each of them. Let us meet in London after the business is completed, and there conclude our last interview on earth."

"What will be your address?"

"In Lambeth there is a narrow alley that leads to the water-side, called Peveril Lane. The last house to the right, towards the river, is my usual lodging; a safe resting-place at all times, and for all men."

"There then will I seek you. And now, Houseman, fare you well! As you remember your word to me, may life flow smooth for your child."

"Eugene Aram," said Houseman, "there is about you something against which the fiercer devil within me would rise in vain. I have read that the tiger can be awed by the human eye, and you compel me into submission by a spell equally unaccountable. You are a singular man, and it seems to me a riddle how we could ever have been thus connected; or how—but we will not rip up the past, it is an ugly sight, and the fire is just out. Those stories do not do for the dark. But to return;—were it only for the sake of my child, you might depend upon me now; better, too, an

arrangement of this sort, than if I had a larger sum in hand which I might be tempted to fling away, and, in looking for more, run my neck into a halter, and leave poor Jane upon charity. But come, it is almost dark again, and no doubt you wish to be stirring: stay, I will lead you back, and put you on the right track, lest you stumble on my friends."

"Is this cavern one of their haunts?" said Aram.

"Sometimes; but they sleep the other side of The Devil's Crag to-night. Nothing like a change of quarters for longevity—eh?"

"And they easily spare you?"

"Yes, if it be only on rare occasions, and on the plea of *family* business. Now then, your hand, as before. 'Sdeath! how it rains!—lightning too!—I could look with less fear on a naked sword than those red, forked, blinding flashes.—Hark! thunder!"

The night had now, indeed, suddenly changed its aspect; the rain descended in torrents, even more impetuously than on the former night, while the thunder burst over their very heads, as they wound upward through the brake. With every instant the lightning, darting through the riven chasm of the blackness that seemed suspended as in a solid substance above, brightened the whole heaven into one livid and terrific flame, and showed to the two men the faces of each other, rendered deathlike and ghastly by the glare. Houseman was evidently affected by the fear that sometimes seizes even the sturdiest criminals, when exposed to those more fearful phenomena of the heavens, which seem to humble into nothing the power and the wrath of man. His teeth chattered, and he muttered broken words about the peril of wandering near trees when the lightning was of that forked character, quickening his pace at every sentence, and sometimes interrupting himself

with an ejaculation, half oath, half prayer, or a congratulation that the rain at least diminished the danger. They soon cleared the thicket, and a few minutes brought them once more to the banks of the stream, and the increased roar of the cataract. No earthly scene, perhaps, could surpass the appalling sublimity of that which they beheld, — every instant the lightning, which became more and more frequent, converting the black waters into billows of living fire, or wreathing itself in lurid spires around the huge rock that now rose in sight, and again, as the thunder rolled onward, darting new fury upon the rushing cataract and the tortured breast of the gulf that raved below. And the sounds that filled the air were even more fraught with terror and menace than the scene; — the waving, the groans, the impetuous force of the rain upon the whirling river, and the everlasting roar of the cataract, answered anon by the yet more awful voice that burst above it from the clouds.

They halted while yet sufficiently distant from the cataract to be heard by each other. "My path," said Aram, as the lightning now paused upon the scene, and seemed literally to wrap in a lurid shroud the dark figure of the student, as he stood, with his hand calmly raised, and his cheek pale, but dauntless and composed, — "my path now lies yonder. In a week we shall meet again."

"By the bend," said Houseman, chuddering, "I would not, for a full hundred, ride alone through the moor you will pass! There stands a gibbet by the road, on which a parrot was hanged in chains. Pray Heaven this night be no omen of the success of our present compact!"

"A steady heart, Houseman," answered Aram, striking into the separate path, "is its own omen."

The student soon gained the spot

in which he had left his horse, the animal had not attempted to break the bridle, but stood trembling from limb to limb, and testified by a quick short neigh the satisfaction with which it hailed the approach of its master, and found itself no longer alone.

Aram remounted, and hastened once more into the main road. He scarcely felt the rain, though the fierce wind drove it right against his path; he scarcely marked the lightning, though, at times, it seemed to dart its arrows on his very form: his heart was absorbed in the success of his schemes.

"Let the storm without howl on," thought he, "that within hath a respite at last. Amidst the winds and rains I can breathe more freely than I have done on the smoothest summer day. By the charm of a deeper mind and a subtler tongue, I have conquered this desperate foe. I have silenced this inveterate spy: and, Heaven be praised, he too has human ties; and by those ties I hold him! Now, then, I hasten to London — I arrange this annuity — see that the law tightens every cord of the compact; and when all is done, and this dangerous man fairly departed on his exile, I return to Madeline, and devote to her a life no longer the vassal of accident and the hour. But I have been taught caution. Secure as my own prudence may have made me from farther apprehension of Houseman, I will yet place myself wholly beyond his power: I will still consummate my former purpose, adopt a new name, and seek a new retreat. Madeline may not know the real cause; but this brain is not barren of excuse. Ah!" as drawing his cloak closer round him, he felt the pulse beat within his breast which contained the order he had obtained from Foster, — "ah! this will now add its quota to purchase, not a momentary relief, but the stepend of perpetual

silence. I have passed through the ordeal easier than I had hoped for. Had the devil at his heart been more difficult to lay, so necessary is his absence, that I must have purchased it at any cost. Courage, Eugene Aram! thy mind, for which thou hast lived, and for which thou hast hazarded thy soul—if soul and mind be distinct from each other—thy mind can support thee yet through every peril: not till thou art stricken into idiocy shalt thou behold thyself defenceless. How cheerfully," muttered he, after a momentary pause,—“how cheerfully, for safety, and to breathe with a quiet heart the air of Madeline's presence, shall I rid myself of all save enough to defy want. And want can never now come to me, as of old. He who knows the sources of every science from which wealth is wrought, holds even wealth at his will.”

Breaking at every interval into these soliloquies, Aram continued to breast the storm until he had won half his journey, and had come upon a long and bleak moor, which was the entrance to that beautiful line of country in which the valleys around Grassdale are embosomed: faster and faster came the rain; and though the thunder-clouds were now behind, they yet followed loweringly, in their black array, the path of the lonely horseman.

But now he heard the sound of hoofs making towards him: he drew his horse on one side of the road, and at that instant, a broad flash of lightning illumining the space around, he beheld four horsemen speeding along at a rapid gallop: they were armed, and conversing loudly—their oaths were

heard jarringly and distinctly amidst all the more solemn and terrific sounds of the night. They came on, sweeping by the student, whose hand was on his pistol, for he recognised in one of the riders the man who had escaped unwounded from Lester's house. He and his comrades were evidently, then, Houseman's desperate associates, and they, too, though they were borne too rapidly by Aram to be able to rein in their horses on the spot, had seen the solitary traveller, and already wheeled round, and called upon him to halt!

The lightning was again gone, and the darkness snatched the robbers, and their intended victim, from the sight of each other. But Aram had not lost a moment; fast fled his horse across the moor, and when, with the next flash, he looked back, he saw the ruffians, unwilling even for ready to encounter the horrors of the night, had followed him but a few paces, and again turned round; still he dashed on, and had now nearly passed the moor: the thunder rolled fainter and fainter from behind, and the lightning only broke forth at prolonged intervals, when suddenly, after a pause of unusual duration, it brought the whole scene into a light, if less intolerable, even more livid than before. The horse, that had hitherto sped on without start or stumble, now recoiled in abrupt affright; and the horseman, looking up at the cause, beheld the gibbet, of which Houseman had spoken, immediately fronting his path, with its ghastly tenant waving to and fro, as the winds rattled through the parched and arid bones; and the inexpressible grin of the skull fixed, as in mockery, upon his countenance.

BOOK IV.

Ἡ Κυpris οὐ πάνδημος· ἱλασχεο τὴν θεὸν εἰπὼν
Οὐρανίαν·—

• • • • •

ΠΡΑΞΙΝΟΗ. Θάρσε, Ζωπύριον, γλυκερίαν τέκνον, οὐ λέγω ἀπὸ τοῦ
ΓΟΡΓΩ. Αἰσθάνεται, τὸ βρέφος, καὶ τὰν πότινναν

ΘΕΟΚΡ.

The Venus, not the vulgar ! Propitiate the divinity, terming her the Uranian.—

• • • • •

PRAXINOA. Be of good cheer, Zopyrion, dear child ; I do not speak of thy father
GORGON. The boy comprehends, by Prometheus.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH WE RETURN TO WALTER.—HIS DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO MR. PERTINAX FILLGRAVE.—THE CORPORAL'S ADVICE, AND THE CORPORAL'S VICTORY.

"Let a physician be ever so excellent, there will be those that censure him."—*Oil Blas.*

We left Walter in a situation of that critical nature, that it would be inhuman to delay our return to him any longer. The blow by which he had been felled stunned him for an instant; but his frame was of no common strength and hardihood, and the imminent peril in which he was placed served to recall him from the momentary insensibility. On recovering himself, he felt that the ruffians were dragging him towards the hedge, and the thought flashed upon him that their object was murder. Nerved by this idea, he collected his strength, and suddenly wresting himself from the grasp of one of the ruffians who had seized him by the collar, he had already gained his knee, and now his feet, when a second blow once more deprived him of sense.

When a dim and struggling consciousness returned to him, he found that the villains had dragged him to the opposite side of the hedge and were deliberately robbing him. He was on the point of renewing an useless and dangerous struggle, when one of the ruffians said,—"

"I think he stirs. I had better draw my knife across his throat."

"Pooh, no!" replied another voice; "never kill if it can be helped: trust me 'tis an ugly thing to think of afterwards. Besides, what use is it? A robbery in these parts is done and forgotten; but a murder rouses the whole country."

"Damnation, man! why, the deed's done already: he's as dead as a door-nail."

"Dead?" said the other, in a startled voice; "No, no!" and leaning down, the ruffian placed his hand on Walter's heart. The unfortunate traveller felt his flesh creep as the hand touched him, but prudently abstained from motion or exclamation. He thought, however, as with dizzy and half-shut eyes he caught the shadowy and dusk outline of the face that bent over him, so closely that he felt the breath of his lips, that it was a face he had seen before; and as the man now rose, and the wan light of the skies gave a somewhat clearer view of his features, the supposition was heightened, (though not absolutely confirmed. But Walter

had no farther power to observe his plunderers; again his brain reeled; the dark trees, the grim shadows of human forms, swam before his glazing eye, and he sunk once more into a profound insensibility.

Meanwhile, the doughty corporal had, at the first sight of his master's fall, halted abruptly at the spot to which his steed had carried him; and coming rapidly to the conclusion that three men were best encountered at a distance, he fired his two pistols, and without staying to see if they took effect, which, indeed, they did not, galloped down the precipitous hill with as much despatch as if it had been the last stage to "Lunnun."

"My poor young master!" muttered he. "But if the worst comes to the worst, the chief part of the money's in the saddle bags any how; and so, mes-sieurs thieves, you're bit--laugh!"

The corporal was not long in reaching the town, and alarming the loungers at the inn-door. A *posse comitatus* was soon formed; and, armed as if they were to have encountered all the robbers between Hounslow and the Apennine, a band of heroes, with the corporal, who had first deliberately reloaded his pistols, at their head, set off to succour "the poor gentleman *what* was already murdered."

They had not got far before they found Walter's horse, which had luckily broke from the robbers, and was now quietly regaling himself on a patch of grass by the road-side. "*He* can get *his* supper, the beast!" grunted the corporal, thinking of his own; and bade one of the party try to catch the animal, which, however, would have declined all such proffers, had not a long neigh of recognition from the Roman nose of the corporal's steed, striking familiarly on the straggler's ear, called it forthwith to the corporal's side: and (while the two chargers exchanged greetings) the corporal seized its rein.

When they came to the spot from which the robbers had made their sally, all was still and tranquil; no Walter was to be seen: the corporal cautiously dismounted, and searched about with as much minuteness as if he were looking for a pin; but the host of the inn at which the travellers had dined the day before, stumbled at once on the right track. Gouts of blood on the white chalky soil directed him to the hedge, and creeping through a small and recent gap, he discovered the yet breathing body of the young traveller.

Walter was now conducted with much care to the inn; a surgeon was already in attendance; for having heard that a gentleman had been murdered without his knowledge, Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave had rushed from his house, and placed himself on the road, that the poor creature might not, at least, be buried without his assistance. So eager was he to begin, that he scarce suffered the unfortunate Walter to be taken within, before he whipped out his instruments, and set to work with the smack of an *amateur*.

Although the surgeon declared his patient to be in the greatest possible danger, the sagacious corporal, who thought himself more privileged to know about wounds than any man of peace, by profession, however destructive by practice, could possibly be, had himself examined those his master had received, before he went down to taste his long-delayed supper; and he now confidently assured the landlord and the rest of the good company, in the kitchen, that the blows on the head had been mere flea-bites, and that his master would be as well as ever in a week at the farthest.

And, indeed, when Walter the very next morning woke from the stupor, rather than sleep, he had undergone, he felt himself surprisingly better than the surgeon, producing his probe

hastened to assure him he possibly would be.

By the help of Mr Portinax Fillgrave, Walter was detained several days in the town; nor is it wholly improbable, but that for the dexterity of the corporal, he might be in the town to this day; not, indeed, in the comfortable shelter of the old-fashioned inn, but in the colder quarters of a certain green spot, in which, despite of its rural attractions, few persons are willing to fix a permanent habitation.

Luckily, however, one evening, the corporal, who had been, to say truth, very regular in his attendance on his master; for, bating the selfishness consequent, perhaps, on his knowledge of the world, Jacob Bunting was a good-natured man on the whole, and liked his master as well as he did any thing, always excepting Jacobina and board wages; one evening, we say, the corporal, coming into Walter's apartment, found him sitting up in his bed, with a very melancholy and dejected expression of countenance.

"And well, sir, what does the doctor say?" asked the corporal, drawing aside the curtains.

"Ah! Bunting, I fancy it's all over with me!"

"The Lord forbid, sir! You're jesting surely!"

"Jesting! my good fellow: ah! just get me that phial."

"The filthy stuff!" said the corporal, with a wry face. "Well, sir, if I had had the dressing of you—been had away to Yarker, only this. Man's a worm; and when a doctor gets in on his back, he is sure to angle for the devil with the bait—*ugh!*"

"What! you really think that d—d fellow, Fillgrave, is keeping me on in this way?"

"Is he a fool, to give up three phials a-day, to *did* item, *ditto*, *ditto*?" cried the corporal, as if astonished at the question. "But don't you feel

yourself getting a deal better every day? Don't you feel all this ere stuff revive you?"

"No, indeed, I was amazingly better the first day than I am now; I make progress from worse to worse. Ah! Bunting, if Peter Dealtry were here, he might help me to an appropriate epitaph: as it is, I suppose I shall be very simply labelled. Fillgrave will do the whole business, and put it down in his bill—item, nine draughts—item, one epitaph."

"Lord a mercy, your honour!" said the corporal, drawing out a little red-spotted pocket-handkerchief; "how can—just so!—it's quite moving."

"I wish we were moving!" sighed the patient.

"And so we might be," cried the corporal; "so we might, if you'd pluck up a bit. Just let me look at your honour's head; I knows what a confusion is better nor any of 'em."

The corporal having obtained permission, now removed the bandages wherewith the doctor had bound his intended sacrifice to Pluto, and after peering into the wounds for about a minute, he thrust out his under lip, with a contemptuous,—

"Pshaugh! *ugh!* And how long," said he, "does Master Fillgrave say you be to be under his hands!—*ugh!*"

"He gives me hopes that I may be taken out an airing very gently (yes, heaves always go very gently) in about three weeks!"

The corporal started, and broke into a long whistle. He then grinned from ear to ear, snapped his fingers, and said, "Man of the world, sir,—man of the world every inch of him!"

"He seems resolved that I shall be a man of another world," said Walter.

"Told ye what, sir—take my advice—your honour knows I be no fool—show off them ere wrappers, let me put on a scrap of plaster—pitch phials to devil—order out horses to-morrow,

and when you've been in the air half an hour, won't know yourself again!"

"Bunting! the horses out to-morrow!"

"Faith! I don't think I could walk across the room."

"Just try, your honour."

"Ah! I'm very weak, very weak—my dressing gown and slippers—your arm, Bunting—well, upon my honour, I walk very stontly, eh? I should not have thought this! Leave go: why I really get on without your assistance!"

"Walk as well as ever you did."

"Now I'm out of bed, I don't think I shall go back again to it."

"Would not, if I was your honour."

"And after so much exercise, I really fancy I've a sort of an appetite."

"Like a beefsteak?"

"Nothing better."

"Pint of wine?"

"Why, that would be too much—eh?"

"Not it."

"Go, then, my good Bunting: go, and make haste—atop, I say, that d—d fellow——"

"Good sign to swear," interrupted the corporal; "swore twice within last five minutes—famous symptom!"

"Do you choose to hear me? That d—d fellow, Fillgrave, is coming back in an hour to bleed me: do you mount guard—refuse to let him in—pay him his bill—you have the money. And harkye, don't be rude to the rascal."

"Rude, your honour! not I—been in the Forty-second—knows discipline—only rude to the privates!"

The corporal having seen his master conduct himself respectably toward the viands with which he supplied him—having set his room to rights, brought him the candles, borrowed him a book, and left him, for the present, in extremely good spirits, and prepared for the flight of the morrow; the corporal, I say, now lighting his pipe, stationed himself at the door of the inn, and waited for Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave. Presently the doctor, who

was a little thin man, came bustling across the street, and was about, with a familiar "Good evening," to pass by the corporal, when that worthy, dropping his pipe, said respectfully, "Beg pardon, sir—want to speak to you—a little favour. Will your honour walk into the back-parlour?"

"Oh! another patient," thought the doctor; "these soldiers are careless fellows—often get into scrapes. Yea, friend, I'm at your service."

The corporal showed the man of phials into the back-parlour, and, hemming thrice, looked sheepish, as if in doubt how to begin. It was the doctor's business to encourage the bashful.

"Well, my good man," said he, brushing off, with the arm of his coat, some dust that had settled on his inexpressibles, "so you want to consult me?"

"Indeed, your honour, I do; but—feel a little awkward in doing so—a stranger and all." •

"Pooh!—medical men are never strangers. I am the friend of every man who requires my assistance."

"Augh!—and I do require your honour's assistance very sadly."

"Well—well—speak out. Anything of long standing?"

"Why, only since we have been here, sir."

"Oh, that's all! Well."

"Your honour's so good—that—won't scruple in telling you all. You sees as how we were robbed—master, at least, was—had some little in my pockets—but we poor servants are never too rich. You seems such a kind gentleman—so attentive to master—though you must have felt how disinterested it was to 'tend a man what had been robbed—that I have no hesitation in making bold to ask you to lend us a few guineas, just to help us out with the bill here.—bother!"

"Fellow!" said the doctor, rising, "I don't know what you mean; but

I'd have you to learn that I am not to be cheated out of my time and property. I shall insist upon being paid my bill instantly, before I dress your master's wound once more!"

"Augh!" said the corporal, who was delighted to find the doctor come so immediately into the snare:—"won't be so cruel, surely!—why, you'll leave us without a shiner to pay my host here!"

"Nonsense!—Your master, if he's a gentleman, can write home for money."

"Ah, sir, all very well to say so; but, between you and me and the bed post, young master's quarrelled with old master—old master won't give him a rap: so I'm sure, since your honour's a friend to every man who requires your assistance—noble saying, sir!—you won't refuse us a few guineas. And as for your bill—why——"

"Sir, you're an impudent vagabond!" cried the doctor, as red as a rose-draught, and flinging out of the room; "and I warn you, that I shall bring in my bill, and expect to be paid within ten minutes."

The doctor waited for no answer—he hurried home, scratched off his

account, and flew back with it in as much haste as if his patient had been a month longer under his care, and was consequently on the brink of that happier world, where, since the inhabitants are immortal, it is very evident that doctors, as being useless, are never admitted.

The corporal met him as before.

"There, sir!" cried the doctor, breathlessly; and then putting his arms a kinbo, "take that to your master, and desire him to pay me instantly."

"Augh! and shall do no such thing."

"You won't!"

"No, for shall pay you myself. Where's your receipt—eh!"

And with great composure the corporal drew out a well filled purse, and discharged the bill. The doctor was so thunderstricken, that he pocketed the money without uttering a word. He consoled himself, however, with the belief that Walter, whom he had tamed into a becoming hypochondria, would be sure to send for him the next morning. Alas, for mortal expectations!—the next morning Walter was once more on the road.

CHAPTER II.

NEW TRACKS OF THE FATE OF GEOFFREY LESTER.—WALTER AND THE CORPORAL PROCEED ON A FRESH EXPEDITION.—THE CORPORAL IS ESPECIALLY SAGACIOUS ON THE OLD TOPIC OF THE WORLD.—HIS OPINIONS ON THE MEN WHO CLAIM KNOWLEDGE THEREOF;—ON THE ADVANTAGES ENJOYED BY A VALET,—ON THE SCIENCE OF SUCCESSFUL LOVE;—ON VIRTUE AND THE CONSTITUTION;—ON QUALITIES TO BE DESIRED IN A MISTRESS, ETC.—A LANDSCAPE.

"This way of talking of his very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn"—*Spectator*, No. 194.

WALTER found, while he made search himself, that it was no easy matter, in so large a county as Yorkshire, to obtain even the preliminary particulars, viz. the place of residence, and the name of the colonel from India whose dying gift his father had left the house of the worthy Courtland to claim and receive. But the moment he committed the inquiry to the care of an active and intelligent lawyer, the case seemed to brighten up prodigiously; and Walter was shortly informed that a Colonel Elmore, who had been in India, had died in the year 17—; that by a reference to his will, it appeared that he had left to Daniel Clarke the sum of a thousand pounds, and the house in which he resided before his death; the latter being merely leasehold, at a high rent, was specified in the will to be of small value: it was situated in the outskirts of Knaresborough. It was also discovered that a Mr. Jonas Elmore, the only surviving executor of the will, and a distant relation of the deceased colonel's, lived about fifty miles from York, and could, in all probability, better than any one, afford Walter those farther particulars of which he was so desirous to be informed. Walter immediately proposed to his lawyer to accompany him to this gentleman's

house; but it so happened that the lawyer could not, for three or four days, leave his business at York: and Walter, exceedingly impatient to proceed on the intelligence thus granted him, and disliking the meagre information obtained from letters, when a personal interview could be obtained, resolved himself to repair to Mr. Jonas Elmore's without farther delay. And behold, therefore, our worthy corporal and his master again mounted, and commencing a new journey.

The corporal, always fond of adventure, was in high spirits.

"See, sir," said he to his master patting with great affection the neck of his steed,—“see, sir, how brisk the creatures are; what a deal of good their long rest at York city's done 'em! Ah, your honour, what a fine town that ere be!—Yet,” added the corporal, with an air of great superiority, “it gives you no notion of Lunnun like, on the faith a man, no!”

“Well, Bunting, perhaps we may be in London within a month hence.”

“And afore we gets there, your honour,—no offence,—but should like to give you some advice; 'tis ticklish place, that Lunnun; and though you be by no manner of means deficient in genius, yet, sir, *you be* young, and I be—”

"*Old*,"—true, Bunting," added Walter, very gravely.

"*Augh*—batter! old, sir! old, sir! A man in the prime of life,—hair *cos*, black, (bating a few grey ones that have had since twenty,—care, and military service, sir,—carriage straight,—teeth strong,—not an ail in the world, bating the rheumatics,—is not old, sir,—not by no manner of means—*laugh!*"

"You are very right, Bunting; when I said old, I meant experienced. I assure you I shall be very grateful for your advice; and suppose, while we walk our horses up this hill, you begin lecture the first. London's a fruitful subject; all you can say on it will not be soon exhausted."

"Ah, may well say that," replied the corporal, exceedingly flattered with the permission he had obtained; "and anything my poor wit can suggest, quite at your honour's service,—*eh*, hem? You must know by *lammun*, I means the world, and by the world means *lammun*; know one—know t'other. But 'tis not them as affects to be most knowing as be so at bottom. Begging your honour's pardon, I thinks gentlefolks what lives only with gentlefolks, and calls themselves men of the world, be often no wiser nor faggon creatures, and live in a *Gentle* darkness."

"The true knowledge of the world," said Walter, "is only then for the corporals of the forty-second,—*eh*, Bunting?"

"As to that, sir," quoth the corporal, "is not being of this calling or of that calling that helps one on; 'tis an inborn sort of genius, the talent of observing, and growing wise by observing. One pecks up crumb here, crumb there; but if one has not good digestion, Lord, what amuses a feast! Heavily man survives on a tabor, sickly looks pale on a haunch. You sees, your honour, as I said afore, I was own servant to Colonel Dymart; he was

a lord's naphy, a very *kay* gentleman, and great hand with the ladies,—not a man more in the world;—so I had the opportunity of learning what's what among the best set; at his honour's expense, too,—*augh!* To my mind, sir, there is not a place from which a man has a better view of things than the bit carpet behind a gentleman's chair. The gentleman eats, and talks, and swears, and jests, and plays cards, and makes loves, and tries to cheat, and is cheated, and his man stands behind with his eyes and ears open—*augh!*"

"One should go into service to learn diplomacy, I see," said Walter, greatly amused.

"Does not know what 'plomacy be, sir, but knows it would be better for many a young master nor all the colleges;—would not be so many bubbles if my lord could take a turn now and then with John. A-well, sir! how I used to laugh in my sleeve like, when I saw my master, who was thought the knowingest gentleman about Court taken in every day smack afore my face. There was one lady whom he had tried hard, as he thought, to get away from her husband; and he used to be so mighty pleased at every glance from her brown eyes—and be d—d to them!—and so careful the husband should not see—so pluming himself on his discretion here, and his conquest there,—when, Lord bless you, it was all settled twixt man and wife aforehand! And while the colonel laughed at the cuckold, the cuckold laughed at the dupe. For you sees, sir, as how the colonel was a rich man, and the jewels as he bought for the lady went half into the husband's pocket—he! he! That's the way of the world, sir,—that's the way of the world!"

"Upon my word, you draw a very bad picture of the world; you colour highly, and by the way, I observe that whenever you find any man com-

mitting a reguish action, instead of calling him a scoundrel, you shew those great teeth of yours, and chuckle out 'A man of the world! a man of the world!'

"To be sure, your honour; the proper name, too. 'Tis your green-horns who fly into a passion, and use hard words. You see, sir, there's one thing we learn afore all other things in the world—to butter bread. Knowledge of others, means only the knowledge which side bread's buttered. In short, sir, the wiser grow, the more take care of ourself. Some persons make a mistake, and, in trying to take care of themselves, run neck into halter—baugh! they are not rascals—they are *would-be* men of the world. Others be more prudent (for, as I said afore, sir, discretion is a pair of stirrups); *they* be the true men of the world."

"I should have thought," said Walter, "that the knowledge of the world might be that knowledge which preserves us from being cheated, but not that which enables us to cheat."

"Augh!" quoth the corporal, with that sort of smile with which you see an old philosopher put down a high-sounding error from a young disciple who flatters himself he has uttered something prodigiously fine,—
"augh! and did I not tell you, t'other day, to look at the professions, your honour? What would a lawyer be if he did not know how to cheat a witness and humbug a jury!—knows he is lying: why is he lying? for love of his fees, or his fame like, which gets fees;—augh! is not that cheating others? The doctor, too—Master Fillgrave, for instance?"

"Say no more of doctors; I abandon them to your satire, without a word."

"The lying knaves! Don't they say one's well when one's ill—ill when one's well?—profess to know what don't know? thrust solemn plizzes into every abomination, as if

learning lay hid in a —? and all for their neighbour's money, or their own reputation which makes money—
augh!" In short, sir, look where will, impossible to see so much cheating allowed, praised, encouraged, and feel very angry with a cheat who has only made a mistake. But when I sees a man butter his bread carefully—knife steady—butter thick, and hungry fellows looking on and licking chops—mothers stopping their brats; 'See, child, respectable man,—how thick his bread's buttered! pull off your hat to him;—when I sees that, my heart warms: there's the *true* man of the world—*augh!*'"

"Well, Bunting," said Walter, laughing, "though you are thus lenient to those unfortunate gentlemen whom others call rogues, and thus laudatory of gentlemen who are at best discreetly selfish, I suppose you admit the possibility of virtue, and your heart warms as much when you see a man of worth as when you see a man of the world?"

"Why, you knows, your honour," answered the corporal, "so far as *virtue's* concerned, there's a deal in constitution; but as for knowledge of the world, one gets it oneself!"

"I don't wonder, Bunting—as your opinion of women is much the same as your opinion of men—that you are still unmarried."

"Augh! but your honour mistakes; I am no mice-and-trope. Men are neither one thing nor t'other, neither good nor bad. A prudent parson has nothing to fear from 'em, nor a foolist one anything to gain—baugh! As to the women creturs, your honour, as I said, *virtue's* a deal in the constitution. Would not ask what a lassie's mind be, nor what her eddycation; but see what her habits be, that's all,—habits and constitution all one,—play into one another's hands."

"And what sort of signs, Bunting, would you mostly esteem in a lady?"

"First place, sir, woman I'd marry must not mope when alone; must be able to 'muse herself,—must be easily 'mused. That's a great sign, sir, of an innocent mind, to be tickled with strains. Besides, employment keeps 'em out of harm's way. Second place, should observe, if she was very fond of plagues, your honour—sorry to move—that's a sure sign she won't tire easily; but that if she like you now from fancy, she'll like you by and by from custom. Thirdly, your honour, she should not be averse to dress—a hinting that way shows she has a desire to please people who don't care about pleasing, always sullen. Fourthly, she must bear to be crossed—I'd be quite sure that she might be contradicted, without mumping or storming; 'cause then, you knows, your honour, if she wanted any thing expensive, need not give it—ugh! Fifthly, must not set up for a saint, your honour; they pye-house she-creeturs always thinks themselves so much better nor we men; don't understand our language and ways, your honour; they wants us not only to belave, but to tremble—bell-r!"

"I like your description well enough, on the whole," said Walter; "and when I look out for a wife I shall come to you for advice."

"Your honour may have it already—Miss Ellnor's just the thing."

Walter turned away his head, and told Bunting, with great show of indignation, not to be a fool.

The corporal, who was not quite certain of his ground here, but who knew that Madeline, at all events, was going to be married to Aram, and deemed it, therefore, quite useless to waste any praise upon her, thought that a few random shots of eulogium were worth throwing away on a chance, and consequently continued,—

"Augh, your honour,—'tis not cause I have eyes, that I be 'a a fool,

Miss Ellnor and your honour be only cousins, to be sure; but more like brother and sister, nor any thing else. Howsoever, she's a rare cretur, whoever gets her: has a face that puts one in good humour with the world, if one sees it first thing in the morning. 'Tis as good as the sun in July—ugh! But, as I was saying, your honour, 'bout the women creturs in general—"

"Enough of them, Bunting; let us suppose you have been so fortunate as to find one to suit you—how would you woo her? Of course there are certain secrets of courtship, which you will not hesitate to impart to one who, like me, wants such assistance from art,—much more than you can do, who are so bountifully favoured by nature."

"As to nature," replied the corporal, with considerable modesty, for he never disputed the truth of the compliment, "'tis not 'cause a man be six feet without 's shoes that he's any nearer to lady's heart. Sir, I will own to you, howsoever it makes 'gainst your honour and myself, for that matter—that don't think one is a bit more lucky with the ladies for being so handsome! 'Tis all very well with them ere willing ones, your honour—ought at a glance; but as for the better sort, one's beauty's all bother! Why, sir, when we see some of the most fortunatest men among she-creetur—what poor little minnikens they be! One's a dwarf—another knock-kneed—a third squints—and a fourth might be shown for a lapa! Neither, sir, is it your soft, insinuating, die-away youths, as seem at first so seductive; they do very well for lovers, your honour: but then it's always—rejected ones! Neither, your honour, does the art of succeeding with the ladies 'quire all those finniken minnikinins, flourishes, and maxims, and saws, which the colonel, my old master, and the great gentle-

Use, as he knowing, call the art of :—haugh ! The whole science, sir, consists in these two rules—'Ax soon, and ax often.'"

"There seems no great difficulty in hem, Bunting."

"Not to us who has gumption, sir ; but then there is summit in the manner of axing—one can't be too hot—can't flatter too much—and, above all, one must never take a refusal. There, sir, now,—if you takes my advice—may break the peace of all the husbands in Lunnun—bother—whaugh !"

"My uncle little knows what a praiseworthy tutor he has secured me in you, Bunting," said Walter, laughing ; "and now, while the road is so good, let us make the most of it."

As they had set out late in the day, and the corporal was fearful of another attack from a hedge, he resolved that, about evening, one of the horses should be seized with a sudden lameness (which he effected by slyly inserting a stone between the shoe and the hoof), that required immediate attention and a night's rest ; so that it was not till the early noon of the next day that our travellers entered the village in which Mr. Jonas Elmore resided.

It was a soft tranquil day, though one of the very last in October ; for the reader will remember that time had not stood still during Walter's submission to the care of Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave, and his subsequent journey and researches.

The sun-light rested on a broad patch of green heath, covered with furze, and around it were scattered the cottages and farm-houses of the little village. On the other side, as Walter descended the gentle hill that led into this remote hamlet, wide and flat meadows, interspersed with several fresh and shaded ponds, stretched away towards a belt of rich woodland gorgeous with the melancholy pom-

by which the "regal year" seeks to veil its decay. Among these meadows you might now see groups of cattle quietly grazing, or standing half hid in the still and sheltered pools. Still farther, crossing to the woods, a solitary sportsman walked careless on, surrounded by some half a dozen spaniels, and the shrill small tongue of one younger straggler of the canine crew, who had broken indecorously from the rest, and already entered the wood, might be just heard, softened down by the distance, into a wild, cheery sound, that animated, without disturbing, the serenity of the scene.

"After all," said Walter aloud, "the scholar was right—there is nothing like the country !

* Oh, happiness of sweet retired content,
To be at once secure and innocent !"

"Be them verses in the Psalms, sir !" said the corporal, who was close behind.

"No, Bunting ; but they were written by one who, if I recollect right, set the Psalms to verse.* I hope they meet with your approbation !"

"Indeed, sir, and no—since they ben't in the Psalms."

"And why, Mr. Critic !"

"'Cause what's the use of security, if one's innocent, and does not mean to take advantage of it!—haugh ! One does not lock the door for nothing, your honour !"

"You shall enlarge on that honest doctrine of yours another time ; meanwhile, call that shepherd, and ask the way to Mr. Elmore's."

The corporal obeyed, and found that a clump of trees, at the farther corner of the waste land, was the grove that surrounded Mr. Elmore's house : a short canter across the heath brought them to a white gate, and having passed this, a comfortable brick mansion, of moderate size, stood before them.

CHAPTER III.

A SCHOLAR, BUT OF A DIFFERENT MOULD FROM THE STUDENT OF GRASSDALE
— NEW PARTICULARS CONCERNING GEOFFREY LESTER. — THE JOURNEY
RECOMMENCED.

"Inconitque

Libria" *—HORACE.

* *Valat, ambigua*

Mobilis alia, Hora. †—SENeca.

Upon inquiring for Mr. Elmore, Walter was shown into a handsome library, that appeared well stocked with books of that good, old-fashioned size and solidity, which are now fast passing from the world, or at least shrinking into old shops and public collections. The time may come, when the mouldering remains of a folio will attract as much philosophical astonishment as the bones of the mammoth. For behold, the deluge of writers hath produced a new world of small octavo; and in the next generation, thanks to the popular libraries, we shall only alternate between the *quadrone* and the diamond edition. Nay, we foresee the time when a very handsome collection may be carried about in one's waistcoat-pocket, and a shade library of the British Classics be neatly arranged in a well-compacted snuff-box.

In a few minutes Mr. Elmore made his appearance: he was a short, well-built man, about the age of fifty. Contrary to the established mode, he wore no wig, and was very bald; except at the sides of the head, and a little circular island of hair in the centre. But this defect was rendered the less visible by a profusion of

powder. He was dressed with evident care and precision; a snuff-coloured coat was adorned with a respectable profusion of gold lace; his breeches were of plum-coloured satin; his salmon-coloured stockings, scrupulously drawn up, displayed a very handsome calf; and a pair of steel buckles, in his high-heeled and square-toed shoes, were polished into a lustre which almost rivalled the splendour of diamonds. Mr. Jonas Elmore was a bean, a wit, and a scholar of the old school. He abounded in jests, in quotations, in smart sayings, and pertinent anecdotes; but, withal, his classical learning (out of the classics he knew little enough) was at once elegant, but wearisome; pedantic, but profound.

To this gentleman Walter presented a letter of introduction which he had obtained from a distinguished clergyman in York. Mr. Elmore received it with a profound salutation:—

"Aha, from my friend, Dr. Helenist," said he, glancing at the seal: "a most worthy man, and a ripe scholar. I presume at once, sir, from his introduction, that you yourself have cultivated the *literas humaniores*. Pray sit down—ay, I see, you take up a book—an excellent symptom; it gives me an immediate insight into

* *And he hath grown old in books.*

† *Time flies, still moving on uncertain wing.*

your character. But you have chanced, sir, on light reading — one of the Greek novels, I think : you must not judge of my studies by such a specimen."

"Nevertheless, sir, it does not seem to my unskilful eye very easy Greek."

"Pretty well, sir; barbarous, but amusing,—pray, continue it. The triumphal entry of Papius Emilius is not ill told. I confess, that I think novels might be made much higher works than they have been yet. Doubtless, you remember what Aristotle says concerning painters and sculptors, that they teach and recommend virtue in a more efficacious and powerful manner than philosophers by their dry precepts, and are more capable of amending the vicious, than the best moral lessons without such aid. But how much more, sir, can a good novelist do this, than the best sculptor or painter in the world! Every one can be charmed by a fine novel, few by a fine painting. *Docti rationem artis intelligent, indocti voluptatem.** A happy sentence that in Quinctilian, sir, is it not? But, bless me, I am forgetting the letter of my good friend, Dr. Hebraist. The charms of your conversation carry me away. And, indeed, I have seldom the happiness to meet a gentleman so well-informed as yourself. I confess, sir, I confess that I still retain the tastes of my boyhood; the Muses cradled my childhood, they now smooth the pillow on my footstool—*Quem tu, Melpomene, &c.*—You are not yet subject to gout, *dura podagra*. By the way, how is the worthy doctor, since his attack?—Ah, see now, if you have not still, by your delightful converse, kept me from his letter—yet, positively I need no introduction to you : Apollo has already presented you to me. And as for the Doctor's

letter, I will read it after dinner; for as Seneca —"

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, sir," said Walter, who began to despair of ever coming to the matter, which seemed lost sight of beneath this battery of erudition, "but you will find by Dr. Hebraist's letter, that it is only on business of the utmost importance that I have presumed to break in upon the learned leisure of Mr. Jonas Elmore."

"Business!" replied Mr. Elmore, producing his spectacles, and deliberately placing them athwart his nose,

"His mane edictum, post prandia Calliclisen &c

Business in the morning, and the ladies after dinner. Well, sir, I will yield to you in the one, and you must yield to me in the other: I will open the letter, and you shall dine here, and be introduced to Mrs. Elmore. What is your opinion of the modern method of folding letters? I—but I see you are impatient." Here Mr. Elmore at length broke the seal; and to Walter's great joy, fairly read the contents within.

"Oh! I see, I see!" he said, refolding the epistle, and placing it in his pocket-book; "my friend, Dr. Hebraist, says you are anxious to be informed whether Mr. Clarke ever received the legacy of my poor cousin, Colonel Elmore; and if so, any tidings I can give you of Mr. Clarke himself, or any clue to discover him, will be highly acceptable. I gather, sir, from my friend's letter, that this is the substance of your business with me, *caput negotii*;—although, like Timanthes, the painter, he leaves more to be understood than is described, '*intelligitur plus quam pingitur*,' as Pliny has it."

"Sir," said Walter, drawing his chair close to Mr. Elmore, and his anxiety forcing itself to his countenance, "that is indeed the substance

* The learned understand the reason of art, the unlearned the pleasure

of my business with you ; and so important will be any information you can give me, that I shall esteem it a ———"

"Not a very great favour, eh !—not very great !"

"Yes, indeed, a very great obligation."

"I hope not, sir ; for what says Tacitus—that profound reader of the human heart !—*beneficia eo usque lata sunt*," &c. ; favours easily repaid beget affection—favours beyond return engender hatred. But, sir, a truce to trifling ; and here Mr. Elmore composed his countenance, and changed,—which he could do at will, so that the change was not expected to last long—the pedant for the man of business.

"Mr. Clarke did receive his legacy : the lease of the house at Knareborough was also sold by his desire, and produced the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds ; which being added to the farther sum of a thousand pounds, which was bequeathed to him, amounted to seventeen hundred and fifty pounds. It so happened, that my cousin had possessed some very valuable jewels, which were bequeathed to myself. I, sir, studious, and a cultivator of the Muse, had no love and no use for those baubles ; I preferred barbaric gold to barbaric pearl, and knowing that Clarke had been in India, whence those jewels had been brought, I showed them to him, and consulted his knowledge on these matters, as to the best method of obtaining a sale. He offered to purchase them of me, under the impression that he could turn them to a profitable speculation in London. Accordingly we came to terms. I sold the greater part of them to him for a sum a little exceeding a thousand pounds. He was pleased with his bargain ; and came to borrow the rest of me, in order to look at them more considerably at home,

and determine whether or not he should buy them also. Well, sir (but here comes the remarkable part of the story), about three days after this last event, Mr. Clarke and my jewels both disappeared in rather a strange and abrupt manner. In the middle of the night he left his lodging at Knareborough, and never returned ; neither himself nor my jewels were ever heard of more !"

"Good Heavens !" exclaimed Walter, greatly agitated ; "what was supposed to be the cause of his disappearance !"

"That," replied Elmore, "was never positively traced. It excited great surprise and great conjecture at the time. Advertisements and handbills were circulated throughout the country, but in vain. Mr. Clarke was evidently a man of eccentric habits, of a hasty temper, and a wandering manner of life ; yet it is scarcely probable that he took this sudden manner of leaving the country, either from whim or some secret but honest motive never divulged. The fact is, that he owed a few debts in the town—that he had my jewels in his possession, and as (pardon me for saying this, since you take an interest in him) his connexions were entirely unknown in these parts, and his character not very highly estimated,—whether from his manner, or his conversation, or some undefined and vague rumours, I cannot say.)—it was considered by no means improbable that he had decamped with his property in this sudden manner in order to save himself that trouble of settling accounts which a more seemingly useful public method of departure might have rendered necessary. A man of the name of Houseman, with whom he was acquainted (a resident in Knareborough), declared that Clarke had borrowed rather a considerable sum from him, and did not scruple openly to accuse him of the evident

design to avoid repayment. A few more dark but utterly groundless conjectures were aloft; and since the closest search, the minutest inquiry, was employed without any result, the supposition that he might have been robbed and murdered was strongly entertained for some time; but as his body was never found, nor suspicion directed against any particular person, these conjectures insensibly died away; and, being so complete a stranger to these parts, the very circumstance of his disappearance was not likely to occupy, for very long, the attention of that old gossip the Public, who, even in the remotest parts, has a thousand topics to fill up her time and talk. And now, sir, I think you know as much of the particulars of the case as any one in these parts can inform you."

We may imagine the various sensations which this unsatisfactory intelligence caused in the adventurous son of the lost wanderer. He continued to throw out additional guesses, and to make farther inquiries concerning a tale which seemed to him so mysterious, but without effect; and he had the mortification to perceive, that the shrewd Jonas was, in his own mind, fully convinced that the permanent disappearance of Clarke was accounted for only by the most dishonest motives.

"And," added Elmore, "I am confirmed in this belief by discovering afterwards, from a tradesman in York who had seen my cousin's jewels, that those I had trusted to Mr. Clarke's hands were more valuable than I had imagined them, and therefore it was probably worth his while to make off with them as quietly as possible. He went on foot, leaving his horse, a sorry nag, to settle with me and the other claimants:—

• I, podes quo te rapiunt et auræ ! " •

• Go, where your feet and fortune take you.

"Heavens!" thought Walter, sinking back in his chair sickened and disheartened, "what a parent, if the opinions of all men who knew him be true, do I thus zealously seek to recover!"

The good-natured Elmore, perceiving the unwelcome and painful impression his account had produced on his young guest, now exerted himself to remove, or at least to lessen it; and, turning the conversation into a classical channel, which with him, was the Lethe to all cares, he soon forgot that Clarke had ever existed, in expatiating on the unappreciated excellencies of Propertius, who, to his mind, was the most tender of all elegiac poets, solely because he was the most learned. Fortunately this vein of conversation, however tedious to Walter, preserved him from the necessity of rejoinder, and left him to the quiet enjoyment of his own gloomy and restless reflections.

At length the time touched upon dinner: Elmore, starting up, adjourned to the drawing-room, in order to present the handsome stranger to the *placens uxor*—the pleasing wife whom, in passing through the hall, he eulogised with an amazing felicity of diction.

The object of these praises was a tall, meagre lady, in a yellow dress carried up to the chin, and who added a slight squint to the clams of red hair, ill concealed by powder, and the dignity of a prodigiously high nose. "There is nothing, sir," said Elmore,—"nothing, believe me, like matrimonial felicity. Julia, my dear, I trust the chickens will not be overdone."

"Indeed, Mr. Elmore, I cannot tell; I did not boil them."

"Sir," said Elmore, turning to his guest, "I do not know whether you will agree with me, but I think a slight tendency to gourmandism is absolutely necessary to complete the

character of a truly classical mind. So many beautiful touches are there in the ancient poets—so many delicate allusions in history and in anecdote relating to the gratification of the palate, that, if a man have no corresponding sympathy with the illustrious epicures of old, he is rendered incapable of enjoying the most beautiful passages there.—Come, sir, the dinner is served.—

Nutritus laetis mollissima corpora mem-
bra.

As they crossed the hall to the dining-room, a young lady, whom Elmore hastily announced as his only daughter, appeared descending the stairs, having evidently retired for the purpose of re-arranging her attire for the conquest of the stranger. There was something in Miss Elmore that reminded Walter of Elmore, and, as the likeness struck him, he felt, by the sudden and involuntary sigh it occasioned, how much the image of his cousin had lately gained ground upon his heart.

Nothing of any note occurred during dinner, until the appearance of the second course, when Elmore, throwing himself back with an air of content, which signified that the first edge of his appetite was blunted, observed,—

"Sir, the second course I always expect to be the more dignified and rational part of a repast,—

Quod nunc ratio est, impetus ante fuit."

"Ah! Mr. Elmore," said the lady, glancing towards a house of very fine pigeons, "I cannot tell you how varied I am at a mistake of the gardeners, you remember my poor pet pigeons, so attached to each other—
—and! not mix with the rest—quite

an inseparable friend-ship. Mr. Lester—well, they were killed, by mistake, for a couple of vulgar pigeons. Ah! I could not touch a bit of them for the world."

"My love," said Elmore, pausing and with great solemnity, "hear how beautiful a consolation is afforded to you in Valerius Maximus:—*'Ubi idem et maximus et honestissimus amor est, aliquando præstat morte iungi quam vitâ distrahi'*" which, being interpreted, means that wherever, as in the case of your pigeons, a thoroughly high and sincere affection exists, it is sometimes better to be joined in death than divided in life.—Give me half the fatter one, if you please, Julia.

"Sir," said Elmore, when the ladies withdrew, "I cannot tell you how pleased I am to meet with a gentleman so deeply imbued with classic lore. I remember, several years ago, before my poor cousin died, it was my lot, when I visited him at Knaresborough, to hold some delightful conversations on learned matters with a very rising young scholar who then resided at Knaresborough,—Eugene Aram. Conversations as difficult to obtain as delightful to remember, for he was exceedingly reserved."

"Aram?" repeated Walter.

"What! you know him then!—and where does he live now?"

"In ———, very near my uncle's residence. He is certainly a remarkable man."

"Yes, indeed he promised to become so. At the time I refer to, he was poor to penury, and haughty as poor; but it was wonderful to note the iron energy with which he pursued his progress to learning. Never did I see a youth,—at that time he was no more,—so devoted to knowledge for itself.

* *It's nourish softest bodice of luxurious rags.*

* *That, which is now reason, at first was not desire.*

* *Doctrinæ pretium triste magister habet.*

* *The master has but sorry remuneration for his teaching.*

"Methinks," added Elmore, "I can see him now, stealing away from the haunts of men,

• With even step and musing gait."

across the quiet fields, or into the woods, whence he was certain not to reappear till nightfall. Ah! he was a strange and solitary being, but full of genius and promise of bright things her after. I have often heard since of his fame as a scholar, but could never learn where he lived, or what was now his mode of life. Is he yet married?"

"Not yet, I believe; but he is not now so absolutely poor as you describe him to have been then, though certainly far from rich."

"Yes, yes, I remember that he received a legacy from a relation shortly before he left Knaresborough. He had very delicate health at that time. Has he grown stronger with increasing years?"

"He does not complain of ill health. And pray, was he then of the same austere and blameless habits of life that he now professes?"

"Nothing *could* be so faultless as his character appeared; the passions of youth—(ah! I was a wild fellow at his age,) never seemed to venture near one—

• Quem casto erudit docta Minerva sinu.'•

Well, I am surprised he has not married. We scholars, sir, fall in love with abstractions, and fancy the

• Whom wise Minerva taught with bosom
charms.

first woman we see is—— Sir, let us drink the ladies."

The next day Walter, having resolved to set out for Knaresborough, directed his course towards that town; he thought it yet possible that he might, by strict personal inquiry, continue the clue that Elmore's account had, to present appearance, broken. The pursuit in which he was engaged, combined, perhaps, with the early disappointment to his affections, had given a grave and solemn tone to a mind naturally ardent and elastic. His character acquired an earnestness and a dignity from late events; and all that once had been hope within him, deepened into thought. As now, on a gloomy and clouded day, he pursued his course along a bleak and melancholy road, his mind was filled with that dark presentiment—that shadow from the coming event, which superstition believes the herald of the more tragic discoveries or the more fearful incidents of life: he felt steeled, and prepared for some dread *dénouement*, to a journey to which the hand of Providence seemed to conduct his steps; and he looked on the shroud that Time casts over all beyond the present moment with the same intense and painful resolve with which, in the tragic representations of life, we await the drawing up of the curtain before the last act, which contains the catastrophe, that, while we long, we half shudder to behold.

Meanwhile, in following the adventures of Walter Lester, we have greatly outstripped the progress of events at Grassdale, and thither we now return.

CHAPTER IV.

ARAM'S DEPARTURE.—MADELINE.—EXAGGERATION OF SENTIMENT NATURAL IN LOVE.—MADELINE'S LETTER.—WALTER'S.—THE WALK.—TWO VERY DIFFERENT PERSONS, YET BOTH INMATES OF THE SAME COUNTRY VILLAGE.—THE HUMOURS OF LIFE, AND ITS DARK PASSIONS, ARE FOUND IN JUXTAPosition EVERY WHERE.

"Her thoughts as pure as the chaste morning's breath,
When from the Night's cold arms it creeps away,
Were clothed in words"—*Detraction Execrated*, by Sir J. SUCKLING.

"*Urbs proxima arpe roma est.*"—*OVID*.

"You positively leave us then to-day, Eugene!" said the squire.

"Indeed," answered Aram, "I hear from my creditor now no longer so, thanks to you; that my relation is so dangerously ill, that, if I have any wish to see her alive, I have not an hour to lose. It is the last surviving relative I have in the world."

"I can say no more, then," rejoined the squire, shrugging his shoulders. "When do you expect to return?"

"At least, before the day fixed for the wedding," answered Aram, with a grave and melancholy smile.

"Well, can you find time, think you, to call at the lodging in which my nephew proposed to take up his abode,—my old lodging,—I will give you the address,—and inquire if Walter has been heard of there: I confess that I feel considerable alarm on his account. Since that short and hurried letter which I read to you, I have heard nothing of him."

"You may rely on my seeing him if in London, and faithfully reporting to you all that I can learn towards removing your anxiety."

"I do not doubt it; no heart is so kind as yours, Eugene. You will not depart without removing the advertisement you are entitled to claim from

me, since you think it may be useful to you in London, should you find a favourable opportunity of increasing your annuity. And now I will no longer detain you from taking your leave of Madeline."

The plausible story which Aram had invented, of the illness and approaching death of his last living relation, was readily believed by the simple family to whom it was told; and Madeline herself checked her tears, that she might not, for *his* sake, sadden a departure that seemed inevitable. Aram accordingly repaired to London that day; the one that followed the night which witnessed his fearful visit to The Devil's Crag.

It is precisely at this part of my history that I love to pause for a moment; a sort of breathing interval between the cloud that has been long gathering, and the storm that is about to burst. And this interval is not without its fleeting gleam of quiet and holy sunshine.

It was Madeline's first absence from her lover since their vows had pledged them to each other; and that first absence, when softened by so many hopes as smiled upon her, is perhaps

* The road is often nearest to the water.

one of the most touching passages in the history of a woman's love. It is marvellous how many things, undied before, suddenly become dear. She then feels what a power of consecration there was in the mere presence of the one beloved; the spot he touched, the book he read, have become a part of him—are no longer inanimate—are inspired, and have a being and a voice. And the heart, too, soothed in discovering so many new treasures, and opening so delightful a world of memory, is not yet acquainted with that weariness—that sense of exhaustion and solitude, which are the true pains of absence, and belong to the absence, not of hope but regret.

"You are cheerful, dear Madeline," said Ellinor, "though you did not think it possible, and he not here!"

"I am occupied," replied Madeline, "in discovering how much I loved him."

We do wrong when we censure a certain exaggeration in the sentiments of those who love. True passion is necessarily heightened by its very ardour to an elevation that seems extravagant only to those who cannot feel it. The lofty language of a hero is a part of his character; without that largeness of idea he had not been a hero. With love, it is the same as with glory: what common minds would call natural in sentiment, merely because it is homely, is not natural, except to tamed affections. That is a very poor, nay, a very coarse, love, in which the imagination makes not the greater part. And the Frenchman, who censured the love of his mistress because it *was* so mixed with the imagination, quarrelled with the body for the soul which inspired and preserved it.

Yet we do not say that Madeline was so possessed by the confidence of her love, that she did not admit the intrusion of a single doubt or fear. When she recalled the frequent gloom

and moody fitfulness of her lover—his strange and mysterious communications with self—the sorrow which, at times, as on that Sabbath eve when he wept upon her bosom, appeared suddenly to come upon a nature so calm and stately, and without a visible cause, when she recalled all these symptoms of a heart not now at rest, it was not possible for her to reject altogether a certain vague and dreary apprehension. Nor did she herself, although to Ellinor she so affected, ascribe this cloudiness and caprice of mood merely to the result of a solitary and meditative life; she attributed them to the influence of an early grief, perhaps linked with the affections, and did not doubt but that one day or another she should learn the secret. As for remorse—the memory of any former sin,—a life so austere and blameless, a disposition so prompt to the activity of good, and so enamoured of its beauty—a mind so cultivated, a temper so gentle, and a heart so easily moved—all would have forbidden, to natures far more suspicious than Madeline's, the conception of such a thought. And so, with a patient gladness, though not without some mixture of anxiety, she suffered herself to glide onward to a future, which, come cloud, come shine, was, she believed at least, to be shared with him.

On looking over the various papers from which I have woven this tale, I find a letter from Madeline to Aram, dated at this time. The characters, traced in the delicate and fair Italian hand coveted at that period, are fading, and in one part, wholly obliterated by time; but there seems to me so much of what is genuine in the heart's beautiful romance in this effusion, that I will lay it before the reader without adding or altering a word:—

"Thank you—thank you, dearest Eugene!—I have received, then, the

first letter you ever wrote me. I cannot tell you how strange it seemed to me, and how agitated I felt, on seeing it; more so, I think, than if it had been yourself who had returned. However, when the first delight of reading it faded away, I found that it had not made me so happy as it ought to have done—as I thought at first it had done. You seem sad and melancholy; a certain nameless gloom appears to me to hang over your whole letter. It affects my spirits—why I know not—and my tears fall even while I read the assurances of your unaltered, unalterable love; and yet this assurance your Madeline—your girl!—never for a moment disbelieves. I have often read and often heard of the distrust and jealousy that accompany love; but I think that such a love must be a vulgar and low sentiment. To me there seems a religion in love, and its very foundation is in faith. You say, dearest, that the noise and stir of the great city oppress and weary you even more than you had expected. You say those harsh faces in a shop business, and care, and anxiety, and ambition, write their lineaments, are wholly unfamiliar to you; you turn aside to avoid them; you wrap yourself up in your solitary feelings of aversion to those you see, and you call upon those not present—upon your Madeline! And would that your Madeline were with you! It seems to me—perhaps you will smile when I say this—that I alone can understand you—I alone can read your heart and your emotions; and, oh! dearest Eugene, that I could read also enough of your past history to know all that has cast a habitual shadow over that lofty heart and that calm and profound nature! You smile when I ask you, but sometimes you sigh,—and the sigh pleases and soothes me better than the smile. * * *

“We have heard nothing more of Walter, and my father continues

to be seriously alarmed about him. Your account, too, corroborates that alarm. It is strange that he has not yet visited London, and that you can obtain no clue of him. He is evidently still in search of his lost parent and following some obscure and uncertain track. Poor Walter! God speed him! The singular fate of his father, and the many conjectures respecting him, have, I believe, preyed on Walter's mind more than he acknowledged. Ellnor found a paper in his closet, where we had occasion to search the other day for something belonging to my father, which was scribbled with all the various fragments of guess or information concerning my uncle, obtained from time to time, and interspersed with some remarks by Walter himself that affected me strangely. It seems to have been, from early childhood, the one desire of my cousin to discover his father's fate. Perhaps the discovery may be already made;—perhaps my long-lost uncle may yet be present at our wedding.

“You ask me, Eugene, if I still pursue my botanical researches. I Sometimes I do; but the flower now has no fragrance, and the herb no secret, that I care for; and astronomy, which you had just begun to teach me, pleases me more; the flowers charm me when you are present, but the stars speak to me of you in absence. Perhaps it would not be so, had I loved a being less exalted than you. Every one,—even my father, even Ellnor, smile when they observe how incessantly I think of you—how utterly you have become all in all to me. I could not tell this to you, though I write it; is it not strange that letters should be more faithful than the tongue? And even your letter, mournful as it is, seems to me kinder, and dearer, and more full of yourself, than, with all the magic of your language, and the silver sweet-

ness of your voice, your spoken words are. I walked by your house yesterday; the windows were closed; there was a strange air of lifelessness and dejection about it. Do you remember the evening in which I first entered that house? Do you—or, rather, is there one hour in which it is not present to you? For me, I live in the past,—it is the present (which is without you) in which I have no life. I passed into the little garden, that with your own hands you have planted for me, and filled with flowers. Ellinor was with me, and she saw my lips move. She asked me what I was saying to myself. I would not tell her;—I was praying for you, my kind, my beloved Eugene. I was praying for the happiness of your future years,—praying that I might requite your love. Whenever I feel the most, I am the most inclined to prayer. Sorrow, joy, tenderness, all emotion, lift up my heart to God. And what a delicious overflow of the heart is prayer! When I am with you—and I feel that you love me—my happiness would be painful, if there were no God whom I might bless for its excess. Do those who believe not love?—have they deep emotions?—can they feel truly—devotedly? Why, when I talk thus to you, do you always answer me with that chilling and mournful smile? You would rest religion only on reason,—as well limit love to the reason also!—what were either without the feelings?

"When—when—when will you return? I think I love you now more than ever. I think I have more courage to tell you so. So many things I have to say,—so many events to relate. For what is not an event to us? the least incident that has happened to either;—the very fading of a flower, if you have worn it, is a whole history to me.

"Athen, God bless you; God reward you; God keep your heart with Him,

dearest, dearest Eugene. And may you every day know better and better how utterly you are loved by your
"MADELINE."

The epistle to which Lester referred, as received from Walter, was one written on the day of his escape from Mr. Pertinax Fillgrave, a short note rather than letter, which ran as follows:—

"MY DEAR UNCLE,

"I have met with an accident, which confined me to my bed, a *rencontré*, indeed, with the knights of the road; nothing serious (so do not be alarmed!) though the doctor would fain have made it so. I am just about to recommence my journey; but not towards London; on the contrary, northward.

"I have, partly through the information of your old friend, Mr. Courtland, partly by accident, found what I hope may prove a clue to the fate of my father. I am now departing to put this hope to the issue. More I would fain say; but, lest the expectation should prove fallacious, I will not dwell on circumstances which would, in that case, only create in you a disappointment similar to my own. Only this take with you, that my father's proverbial good luck seems to have visited him since your latest news of his fate; a legacy, though not a large one, awaited his return to England from India: but see if I am not growing prolix already;—I must break off in order to reserve you the pleasure (may it be so!) of a full surprise!

"God bless you, my dear uncle! I write in spirits and hope. Kindest love to all at home.

"WALTER LESTER.

"P.S. Tell Ellinor that my bitterest misfortune, in the adventure I have referred to, was to be robbed of her purse. Will she knit me another?

By the way, I encountered Sir Peter Halse, such an open-hearted, generous fellow as you said: 'thereby hangs a tale.' "

This letter, which provoked all the curiosity of our little circle, made them anxiously look forward to every post for additional explanation, but that explanation came not; and they were forced to console themselves with the evident exhilaration under which Walter wrote, and the probable supposition that he delayed further information until it could be ample and satisfactory. "Knights of the road," quoth Lester, one day; "I wonder if they were any of the gang that have just visited us. Well, but, poor boy! he does not say whether he has any money left; yet, if he were short of the gold, he would be very unlike his father (or his uncle, for that matter) had he forgotten to enlarge on that subject, however brief upon others."

"Probably," said Ellinor, "the corporal carried the main sum about him in those well-stuffed saddle-bags, and it was only the purse that Walter had about his person that was stolen; and it is clear that the corporal camped, as he mentions nothing about that excellent percentage."

"A shrewd guess, Nell; but pray, why should Walter carry the purse about him so carefully? Ah, you blush; well, will you knit him another?"

"Pshaw, papa! Good-by; I am going to gather you a nosegay."

But Ellinor was seized with a sudden fit of industry, and, somehow or other, she grew fonder of knitting than ever.

The neighbourhood was now tranquil and at peace; the nightly depredations that had infested the green valleys of Grassdale were heard of no more; it seemed a sudden invasion of fraud and crime, which was too

unnatural to the character of the spot invaded to do more than to terrify and to disappear. The *truditor dea die*; the serene steps of one calm day chasing another returned, and the past alarm was only remembered as a tempting subject of gossip to the villagers, and at the hall a theme of eulogium on the courage of Eugene Aram.

"It is a lovely day," said Lester to his daughters as they sat at the window; "come, girls, get your bonnets, and let us take a walk into the village."

"And meet the postman," said Ellinor, archly.

"Yea," rejoined Madeline, in the same vein, but in a whisper that Lester might not hear: "for who knows but that we may have a letter from Walter?"

How prettily sounds such raillery on virgin lips! No, no; nothing on earth is so lovely as the confidences between two happy sisters, who have no secrets but those of a guileless love to reveal!

As they strolled into the village they were met by Peter Dealtry, who was slowly riding home on a large ass, which carried himself and his pommies to the neighbouring market in a mere quiet and luxurious indolence of action than would the harsher motions of the equine species.

"A fine day, Peter; and what news at market?" said Lester.

"Corn high, lay dear, your honour," replied the clerk.

"Ah, I suppose so; a good time to sell ours, Peter; we must see about it on Saturday. But, pray, have you heard any thing from the corporal since his departure?"

"Not I, your honour, not I; though I think as he might have given us a line, if it was only to thank me for my care of his cat; but—"

"There is room to go to roam,
Thanks ought of thee to stay at home."

"A notable distich, Peter; your own composition, I warrant."

"Mine! Lord love your honour, I has no genius, but I has memory; and when them ere beautiful lines of poetry like comes into my head they stays there, and stays till they pops out at my tongue like a bottle of ginger beer. I do loves poetry, sir, 'specially the sacred."

"We know it,—we know it."

"For there be summut in it," continued the clerk, "which smooths a man's heart like a clothes brush, wipes away the dust and dirt, and sets all the nap right: and I thinks as how 'tis what a clerk of the parish ought to study, your honour."

"Nothing better; you speak like an oracle."

"Now, sir, there be the corporal, honest man, what thinks himself mighty clever,—but he has no soul for verse. Lord love ye, to see the faces he makes when I tells him a hymn or so; 'tis quite wicked, your honour,—for that's what the heathen hid, as you well know, sir.

"And when I does discourse of things

Most holy to their tribe,

What does they do?—they mocks at me,

And makes my harp a gibe."

"Tis not what I calls pretty, Miss Ellinor."

"Certainly not, Peter; I wonder, with your talents for verse, you never indulge in a little satire against such perverse taste."

"Satire! what's that? Oh, I knows; what they writes in elections. Why, miss, mayhap——" here Peter paused, and winked significantly—"but the corporal 's a passionate man, you knows: but I could so sting him.—Aha! we'll see, we'll see. Do you know, your honour,"—here Peter altered his air to one of serious importance, as if about to impart a most sagacious conjecture, "I thinks there be one reason why the corporal has not written to me."

"And what's that, Peter?"

"Cause, your honour, he's ashamed of his writing. I fancy as how his spelling is no better than it should be,—but mum 's the word. You sees, your honour, the corporal 's got a tarn for conversation-like; he be a mighty fine talker, sure/y; but he be shy of the pen; 'tis not every man what talks biggest what 's the best scholar at bottom. Why, there's the newspaper I saw in the market (for I always sees the newspaper once a-week) says as how some of them great speakers in the parliament house are no better than ninnies when they gets upon paper; and that 's the corporal's case I suspect: I suppose as how they can't spell all them ere long words they make use on. For my part, I thinks there be mortal deceit (deceit) like in that ere public speaking; for I knows how far a loud voice and a bold face goes, even in buying a cow, your honour; and I'm afraid the country 's greatly bubbled in that ere partiklar; for if a man can't write down clearly what he means for to say, I does not thinks as how he knows what he means when he goes for to speak!"

This speech—quite a moral exposition from Peter, and, doubtless, inspired by his visit to market—for what wisdom cannot come from intercourse?—our good publican delivered with especial solemnity, giving a huge thump on the sides of his ass as he concluded.

"Upon my word, Peter," said Lester, laughing, "you have grown quite a Solomon; and, instead of a clerk, you ought to be a justice of the peace at the least; and, indeed, I must say that I think you shine more in the capacity of a lecturer than in that of a soldier."

"Tis not for a clerk of the parish to have too great a knack at the weapons of the flesh," said Peter, sanctimoniously, and turning aside

to conceal a slight confusion at the unlucky remembrance of his warlike exploits. "What luck, sir, even as to that, why, we has frightened all the robbers away. What would you have us do more?"

"Upon my word, Peter, you say right, and now, good day. Your wife's well, I hope? And Jacobina is not that the cat's name? in high health and favour?"

"Hem, hem! why, to be sure, the cat's a good cat; but she steals Goody Truman's cream as Goody sets for butter regularly every night."

"Oh! you must cure her of that," said Lester, smiling. "I hope that's the worst fault."

"Why, your gardener do say," replied Peter, reluctantly, "as how she goes arter the pheasants in Cops-hole."

"The deuce!" cried the squire; "that will never do: she must be shot, Peter, she must be shot. My pheasants—my best preserves! and poor Goody Truman's cream, too! a perfect devil! Look to it, Peter; if I hear any complaints again, Jacobina is done for.—What are you laughing at, Nell?"

"Well, go thy ways, Peter, for a shrewd man and a clever man; it is not every one who could so suddenly have detected my father's compassion for Goody Truman's cream."

"Pooh!" said the squire: "a pheasant's a serious thing, child; but you women don't mind such matters."

They had now crossed through the village into the fields, and were slowly cantering by

"Hedgerow clime on hilllocks green,"

when, seated under a stunted pollard, they met suddenly on the ill-famed person of Dame Darkmans. She sat bent double with her elbows on her knees, and her hands supporting her chin, looking up to the clear autumnal sky; and as they approached, she did not

stir, or testify by sign or glance that she even perceived them.

There is a certain kind-hearted sociability of temper that you see sometimes among country gentlemen, especially not of the highest rank, who knowing, and looked up to by, every one immediately around them, acquire the habit of accosting all they meet—a habit as painful for them to break, as it was painful for poor Rousseau to be asked "how he did" by an apple-woman. And the kind old squire could not pass even Goody Darkmans (coming thus abruptly upon her) without a salutation.

"All alone, dame, enjoying the fine weather!—that's right. And how fares it with you?"

The old woman turned round her dark and bleared eyes, but without moving limb or posture.

"'Tis well nigh winter now; 'tis not easy for poor folks to fare well at this time o' year. Where be we to get the firewood, and the clothing, and the dry bread, carse it! and the drop o' stuff that's to keep out the cold. Ah, it's fine for you to ask how we does, and the days shortening, and the air sharpening."

"Well, dame, shall I send to * * * for a warm cloak for you!" said Madeline.

"Ha! thankye, young lady—thankye kindly, and I'll wear it at your wedding, for they says you be going to git married to the larned man yander. Wish ye well, ma'am—wish ye well."

And the old hag grinned as she uttered this benediction, that sounded on her lips like the Lord's Prayer on a witch's, which converts the devotion to a crime, and the prayer to a curse.

"Ye're very winsome, young lady," she continued, springing Madeline's tall and rounded figure from head to foot. "Yes, very; but I was as bonny as you once, and if you lives—mind that—

fair and happy as you stand now, you'll be as withered, and foul faced, and wretched as me. Ha! ha! I loves to look on young folk, and think o' that. But mayhap ye won't live to be old—more's the pity! for ye might be a widow, and childless, and a lone 'oman, as I be; if you were to see sixty: an' wouldn't that be nice?—ha! ha!—much pleasure ye'd have in the fine weather then, and in people's fine speeches, eh?"

"Come, dame," said Lester, with a cloud on his benign brow, "this talk is ungrateful to me, and disrespectful to Miss Lester; it is not the way to —"

"Hout!" interrupted the old woman; "I begs pardon, sir, if I offended — I begs pardon, young lady: 'tis my way, poor old soul that I be. And you meant me kindly, and I would not be uncivil, now you are a-going to give me a bonny cloak; and what colour shall it be?"

"Why, what colour would you like best, dame—red?"

"Red! no! like a gypsey-quean, indeed! Besides, they all has red cloaks in the village, yonder. No; a handsome dark grey, or a gay, cheersome black, an' then I'll dance in mourning at your wedding, young lady; and that's what ye'll like. But what ha' ye done with the merry bridegroom, ma'am? Gone away, I hear. Ah, ye'll have a happy life on it, with a gentleman like him. I never seed him laugh once. Why does not he hire me as your sarvant; would not I be a favourite, thin? I'd stand on the thrishold, and give ye good morrow every day. Oh! it does me a deal of good to say a blessing to them as be younger and gayer than me. Madge Darkman's blessing! Och! what a thing to wish for!"

"Well, good day, mother," said Lester, moving on.

"Stay a bit, stay a bit, sir; has ye any commands, miss, yonder, at Master

Aram's? His old 'oman's a gossip of mine; we were young together; and the lads did not know which to like the best. So we often meets and talks of the old times. I be going up there now. Och! I hope I shall be asked to the widdling. And what a nice month to wid in! Novimber, Novimber, that's the merry month for me! But 'tis cold—bitter cold too. Well, good day, good day. Ay," continued the hag, as Lester and the sisters moved on, "ye all goes and throws niver a look behind. Ye despises the poor in your hearts. But the poor will have their day. Och! an' I wish ye were dead, dead, dead, an' I dancing in my bonny black cloak about your graves; for an't all mine dead, cold, cold, rotting, and one kind and rich man might ha' saved them all!"

Thus mumbling, the wretched creature looked after the father and his daughters, as they wound onward, till her dim eyes caught them no longer; and then, drawing her rags round her, she rose, and struck into the opposite path that led to Aram's house.

"I hope that hag will be no constant visitor at your future residence Madeline," said the younger sister. "It would be like a blight on the air."

"And if we could remove her from the parish," said Lester, "it would be a happy day for the village. Yet, strange as it may seem, so great is her power over them all, that there is never a marriage nor a christening in the village from which she is absent; they dread her spite and foul tongue enough, to make them even ask humbly for her presence."

"And the hag seems to know that her bad qualities are a good policy and obtain more respect than amiability would do," said Ellinor. "I think there is some design in all she utters."

"I don't know how it is, but the words and sight of that woman have

struck a damp into my heart," said Madeline, musingly.

"It would be wonderful if they had not, child," said Lester, soothingly; and he changed the conversation to other topics.

As, concluding their walk, they re-entered the village, they encountered that most welcome of all visitors to a country village, the postman—a tall, thin pedestrian, famous for swiftness of foot, with a cheerful face, a swinging gait, and Lester's bag slung over his shoulder. Our little party quickened their pace—one letter—for Madeline—Aram's handwriting. Happy blush—forget it! Ah! no meeting ever gives the delight that a letter can impart in the short absences of a first love!

"And none for me!" said Lester, in a disappointed tone, and Ellinor's hand hung more heavily on his arm, and her step moved slower. "It is very strange in Walter, but I am really more angry than alarmed."

"Be sure," said Ellinor, after a pause, "that it is not his fault. Something may have happened to him. Good Heavens! if he has been attacked again—those fearful highwaymen!"

"Nay," said Lester, "the most probable supposition after all is, that he will not write until his expectations are realised or destroyed. Natural enough, too, it is what I should have done, if I had been in his place."

"Natural!" said Ellinor who now

attacked where she before defended—
"Natural not to give us one line, to say he is well and safe—Natural! I could not have been so remiss!"

"Ay, child, you women are so fond of writing 'tis not so with us, especially when we are moving about—it is always—'Well, I must write to-morrow—well, I must write when this is settled—well, I must write when I arrive at such a place;'—and, meanwhile, time slips on, till perhaps we get ashamed of writing at all. I heard a great man say once, that 'Men must have something effeminate about them to be good correspondents;' and 'faith, I think it's true enough on the whole."

"I wonder if Madeline thinks so!" said Ellinor, enviously glancing at her sister's absorption, as, lingering a little behind, she devoured the contents of her letter.

"He is coming home immediately, dear father; perhaps he may be here to-morrow," cried Madeline, abruptly; "think of that, Ellinor! Ah! and he writes in spirits!"—and the poor girl clapped her hands delightedly, as the colour danced joyously over her cheek and neck.

"I am glad to hear it," quoth Lester; "we shall have him at last besides Ellinor in gaiety!"

"That may easily be," sighed Ellinor to herself, as she glided past them into the house, and sought her own chamber.

CHAPTER V.

A REFLECTION NEW AND STRANGE.—THE STREETS OF LONDON.—A GREAT MAN'S LIBRARY.—A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE STUDENT AND AN ACQUAINTANCE OF THE READER'S.—ITS RESULT.

"Here's a statesman!"

Rolla. Ask for thyself.

Lat. What more can concern me than this?—*The Tragedy of Rolla.*

It was an evening in the declining autumn of 1758; some public ceremony had occurred during the day, and the crowd which it had assembled was only now gradually lessening, as the shadows darkened along the streets. Through this crowd, self-absorbed as usual with them, not one of them—Eugene Aram slowly wound his uncompanioned way. What an incalculable field of dread and sombre contemplation is opened to every man who, with his heart disengaged from himself, and his eyes accustomed to the sharp observance of his tribe, walks through the streets of a great city! What a world of dark and troubled secrets in the breast of every one who hurries by you! Goethe has said somewhere that each of us, the best as the worst, hides within him something—some feeling, some remembrance that, if known, would make you hate him. No doubt the saying is exaggerated; but still, what a gloomy and profound sublimity in the idea!—what a new insight it gives into the hearts of the common herd!—with what a strange interest it may inspire us for the humblest, the tritest passenger that shoulders us in the great thoroughfare of life! One of the greatest pleasures in the world is to walk alone, and at night (while they are yet crowded), through the long

lamp-lit streets of this huge metropolis. There, even more than in the silence of woods and fields, seems to me the source of endless, various meditation.

"*Crescit enim cum amplitudine rerum vis ingeni.*"

There was that in Aram's person which irresistibly commanded attention. The earnest composure of his countenance, its thoughtful paleness, the long hair falling back, the peculiar and estranged air of his whole figure, accompanied as it was by a mildness of expression, and that lofty abstraction which characterises one who is a brooder over his own heart—a sooth-sayer to his own dreams;—all these arrested from time to time the second gaze of the passenger, and forced on him the impression, simple as was the dress, and unpretending as was the gait of the stranger, that in indulging that second gaze he was in all probability satisfying the curiosity which makes us love to fix our regard upon any remarkable man.

At length Aram turned from the more crowded streets, and in a short time paused before one of the most princely houses in London. It was surrounded by a spacious court-yard,

* For the power of the intellect is increased by the amptitude of the things that feed it.

and over the porch the arms of the owner, with the coronet and supporters, were raised in stone.

"Is Lord * * * * * within?" asked Aram, of the bluff porter who appeared at the gate.

"My lord is at dinner," replied the porter, thinking the answer quite sufficient, and about to reclose the gate upon the unseasonable visitor.

"I am glad to find he is at home," repeated Aram, gliding past the servant with an air of quiet and unconscious command, and passing the court-yard to the main building.

At the door of the house, to which you ascended by a flight of stone steps, the valet of the nobleman—the only nobleman introduced in our tale, and consequently the same whom we have presented to our reader in the earlier part of this work, happened to be lounging and enjoying the smoke of the evening air. High bred, prudent, and sagacious, Lord * * * * * knew well how often great men, especially in public life, obtain column for the rudeness of their domestics; and all those, especially about himself, had been consequently tutored into the habits of universal courtesy and deference to the lowest stranger as well as to the highest guest. And trifling as this may seem, it was an act of morality as well as of prudence. Few can guess what pain may be saved to poor and proud men of merit by a similar precaution. The valet, therefore, replied to the visitor's inquiry with great politeness; he recalled Aram's name and repete; and as the earl, taking delight in the company of men of letters, was generally easy of access to all such—the great man's great man instantly conducted the student to the earl's library, and informing him that his lordship had not yet left the dining room, where he was entertaining a large party, assured him that he should be apprised of Aram's visit the moment he did so.

Lord * * * * * was still in office; sundry boxes were scattered on the floor, papers, that seemed countless, lay strewn over the immense library table; but here and there were books of a more seductive character than those of business, in which the mark lately set, and the pencilled note still fresh, showed the fondness with which men of cultivated minds, though engaged in official pursuits, will turn in the momentary intervals of more arid and toilsome life to those lighter studies which perhaps they in reality the most enjoy.

One of these books, a volume of Shaftesbury, Aram carefully took up it opened of its own accord at that most beautiful and profound passage, which contains perhaps the justest sarcasm to which that ingenious and graceful reasoner has given vent:—

"The very spirit of Faction, for the greatest part, seems to be no other than the abuse or irregularity of that social love and common affection which is natural to mankind—for the opposite of socialness is selfishness; and of all characters, the thorough selfish one is the least forward in taking party. The men of this sort are, in this respect, true men of moderation. They are secure of their temper, and possess themselves too well to be in danger of entering warmly into any cause, or engaging deeply with any side or faction."

On the margin of the page was the following note, in the handwriting of Lord * * * * *:—

"Generosity hurries a man into party—philosophy keeps him aloof from it; the Emperor Julian says in his epistle to Thrasylus, 'If you should form only three or four philosophers, you would contribute more essentially to the happiness of mankind than many kings could.' Yet, if all men were philosophers, I doubt whether, though more men would be virtuous, there would be so many

instances of an extraordinary virtue. The violent passions produce dazzling irregularities."

The student was still engaged with this note when the earl entered the room. As the door through which he passed was behind Aram, and he trod with a soft step, he was not perceived by the scholar till he had reached him, and, looking over Aram's shoulder, the earl said: "You will dispute the truth of my remark, will you not? Profound calm is the element in which you would place all the virtues."

"Not *all*, my lord," answered Aram, rising, as the earl now shook him by the hand, and expressed his delight at seeing the student again. Though the sagacious nobleman had no sooner heard the student's name, than, in his own heart, he was convinced that Aram had sought him for the purpose of soliciting a renewal of the offers he had formerly refused; he resolved to leave his visitor to open the subject himself, and appeared courteously to consider the visit as a matter of course, made without any other object than the renewal of the mutual pleasure of intercourse.

"I am afraid, my lord," said Aram, "that you are engaged. My visit can be paid to-morrow if ——"

"Indeed," said the earl, interrupting him, and drawing a chair to the table, "I have no engagements which should deprive me of the pleasure of your company. A few friends have indeed dined with me, but as they are now with Lady * * * * *, I do not think they will greatly miss me; besides, an occasional absence is readily forgiven in us happy men of office;—we, who have the honour of exciting the envy of all England, for being made magnificently wretched."

"I am glad you allow so much, my lord," said Aram, smiling; "I could not have said more. Ambition only makes a favourite to make an ingrate, —she has lavished her honours on

Lord * * * * *, and hear how he speaks of her bounty!"

"Nay," said the earl, "I spoke wantonly, and stand corrected. I have no reason to complain of the course I have chosen. Ambition, like any other passion, gives us unhappy moments; but it gives us also an animated life. In its pursuit, the minor evils of the world are not felt; little crosses, little vexations do not disturb us. Like men who walk in sleep, we are absorbed in one powerful dream, and do not even know the obstacles in our way, or the dangers that surround us: in a word, we have *no private life*. All that is merely domestic, the anxiety and the loss which fret other men, which blight the happiness of other men, are not felt by us: we are wholly public;—so that if we lose much comfort, we escape much care."

The earl broke off for a moment; and then turning the subject, inquired after the Lesters, and making some general and vague observations about that family, came purposely to a pause.

Aram broke it:—

"My lord," said he, with a slight, but not ungraceful, embarrassment, "I fear that, in the course of your political life, you must have made one observation,—that he who promises to-day, will be called upon to perform to-morrow. No man who has anything to bestow, can ever promise with impunity. Some time since, you tendered me offers that would have dazzled more ardent natures than mine; and which I might have advanced some claim to philosophy in refusing. I do not now come to ask a renewal of those offers. Public life, and the haunts of men, are as hateful as ever to my pursuits: but I come, frankly and candidly, to throw myself on that generosity, which proffered to me then so large a bounty. Certain circumstances have taken from me the small pittance which supplied my

wants: I require only the power to pursue my quiet and obscure career of study—your lordship can afford me that power: it is not against custom for the government to grant some small annuity to men of letters—your lord ship's interest could obtain me this favour. Let me add, however, that I can offer nothing in return! Party politics—sectarian interests—are for ever dead to me: even my common studies are of small general utility to mankind. I am conscious of this—would it were otherwise!—Once I hoped it would be—but—” Aram then turned deadly pale, gasped for breath, mastered his emotion, and proceeded—”I have no great claim, then, to this bounty, beyond that which all poor cultivators of the *abstract sciences* can advance. It is well for a country that those sciences should be cultivated; they are not of a nature which is ever lucrative to the possessor—not of a nature that can often be left, like lighter literature, to the fair favour of the public,—they call, perhaps, more than any species of intellectual culture, for the protection of a government; and though in me would be a poor selection, the principle would still be served, and the example furnish precedent for nobler instances hereafter. I have said all, my lord!”

Nothing perhaps more affects a man of some sympathy with those who cultivate letters, than the pecuniary claims of one who can advance them with justice and who advances them also with dignity. If the meanest, the most puerile, the most heart-rending object in the world, is the man of letters, sunk into the habitual beggary, practising the tricks, mounting the rackets, glorying in the shame, of the mangled mendicant and scoundrel,

—what on the other hand, so touches, so subdues us, as the first, and only petition, of one whose intellect dignifies our whole kind, and who prefers it with a certain haughtiness in his very modesty; because, in asking a favour to himself, he may be only asking the power to enlighten the world!

”Say no more, sir,” said the earl, affected deeply, and gracefully giving way to the feeling; “the affair is settled. Consider it so. Name only the amount of the annuity you desire.”

With some hesitation Aram named a sum so moderate, so trivial, that the minister, accustomed as he was to the claims of younger sons and widowed dowagers—accustomed to the hungry cravings of petitioners without merit, who considered birth the only just title to the right of exactions from the public—was literally startled by the contrast. “More than this,” added Aram, “I do not require, and would decline to accept. We have some right to claim existence from the administrators of the common stock—none to claim affluence.”

”Would to Heaven!” said the earl, smiling, “that all claimants were like you; pension lists would not then call for indignation; and ministers would not blush to support the justice of the favours they conferred. But are you still firm in rejecting a more public career, with all its deserved emoluments and just honours? The offer I made you once, I renew with increased avidity now.”

”*Despiciam ditia*,” answered Aram, “and, thanks to you, I may add, *despiciamque famem*.”*

*—Let me despise wealth,” and, thanks to you, I may add, “and let me look down on famine.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE THAMES AT NIGHT.—A THOUGHT.—THE STUDENT RESERES THE RUSSIAN.—
A HUMAN FEELING EVEN IN THE WORST SOIL.

"Clem. 'Tis our last interview !
Stat. Pray Heav'n it be !" — *Clemanthes.*

"On leaving Lord *****'s, Aram proceeded, with a lighter and more rapid step, towards a less courtly quarter of the metropolis.

He had found, on arriving in London, that in order to secure the annual sum promised to Houseman, it had been necessary to strip himself even of the small stipend he had hoped to retain. And hence his visit, and hence his petition, to Lord *****. He now bent his way to the spot in which Houseman had appointed their meeting. To the fastidious reader these details of pecuniary matters, so trivial in themselves, may be a little wearisome, and may seem a little undignified; but we are writing a romance of real life, and the reader must take what is homely with what may be more epic—the pettiness and the wants of the daily world, with its loftier sorrows and its grander crimes. Besides, who knows how darkly just may be that moral which shows us a nature originally high, a soul once all a-thirst for truth, bowed (by what events !) to the manœuvres and the lies of the worldly hypocrite ?

The night had now closed in, and its darkness was only relieved by the wan lamps that vistaed the streets, and a few dim stars that struggled through the reeking haze that curtained the great city. Aram had now gained one of the bridges "that arch the royal Thames," and, in no time dead to scenic attraction, he

there paused for a moment, and looked along the dark river that rushed below.

Oh, God ! how many wild and stormy hearts have stilled themselves on that spot, for one dread instant of thought—of calculation—of resolve—one instant, the last of life ! Look at night along the course of that stately river, how gloriously it seems to mock the passions of them that dwell beside it. Unchanged—unchanging—all around it quick death, and troubled life ; itself smiling up to the grey stars, and singing from its deep heart as it bounds along. Beside it is the senate, proud of its solemn tritons ; and there the cloistered tomb, in which, as the loftiest honour, some handful of the fiercest of the strugglers may gain forgetfulness and a grave ! There is no moral to a great city like the river that washes its walls.

There was something in the view before him, that suggested reflections similar to these, to the strange and mysterious breast of the lingering student. A solemn dejection crept over him, a warning voice sounded on his ear, the fearful genius within him was aroused, and even in the moment when his triumph seemed complete and his safety secured, he felt it only as—

"The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below."

The mist obscured and saddened the

few lights scattered on either side the water, and a deep and gloomy quiet brooded round —

"The very houses seemed asleep.

And all that ugly heart was lying still."

Arousing himself from his short and somnolent reverie, Aram resumed his way, and threading some of the smaller streets on the opposite side of the water, arrived at last in the street in which he was to seek Houseman.

It was a narrow and dark lane, and seemed altogether of a suspicious and detestable locality. One or two examples of the lowest description of abominations broke the dark silence of the spot,—from them streamed the only lights which assisted the single lamp that burned at the entrance of the alley; and bursts of drunken laughter and obscene merriment broke out every now and then from those wretched theatres of *Pleasure*. As Aram passed one of them, a crowd of the lowest order of ruffian and harlot issued noisily from the door, and suddenly obstructed his way; through this vile press, reeking with the stomp and odour of the most repellent character of vice, was the lanky and cold student to force his path. The darkness, his quick step, his downward head, favoured his escape through the unbelieved throng, and he now stood opposite the door of a small and narrow house. A ponderous knocker adorned the door, which consisted of a common strength, being thickly studded with large nails. He knocked twice before his summons was answered, and then a voice from within cried, "Who's there? What want you?"

"I seek one called Houseman."

No answer was returned—some moments elapsed. Again the student knocked, and presently he heard the voice of Houseman himself call out—

"Who's there—Joe the Crackman?"

"Richard Houseman, it is I," answered Aram, in a deep tone, and suppressing the natural feelings of loathing and abhorrence.

Houseman uttered a quick exclamation; the door was hastily unbarred. All within was utterly dark; but Aram felt with a thrill of repugnance the gripe of his strange acquaintance on his hand.

"Ha! it is you!—Come in, come in!—let me lead you. Have a care—cling to the wall—the right hand—now then—stay. So—so—(opening the door of a room, in which a single candle, well nigh in its socket, broke on the previous darkness); here we are! here we are! And how goes it—eh?"

Houseman now bustling about, did the honours of his apartment with a sort of complacent hospitality. He drew two rough wooden chairs, that in some late merriment seemed to have been upset, and lay, cumbering the unwashed and carpetless floor, in a position exactly contrary to that destined them by their maker;—he drew these chairs near a table strowed with drinking horns, half-emptied bottles, and a pack of cards. Dingy caricatures of the large coarse fashion of the day, decorated the walls; and carelessly thrown on another table, lay a pair of huge horse-pistols, an immense shovel hat, a false moustache, a rouge-pot, and a riding-whip. All this the student comprehended with a rapid glance—his lip quivered for a moment—whether with shame or scorn of himself, and then throwing himself on the chair Houseman had set for him, he said—

"I have come to discharge my part of our agreement."

"You are most welcome," replied Houseman, with that tone of coarse, yet flippant jocularity, which afforded to the mood and manner of Aram a still stronger contrast than his more unrelieved brutality.

"There," said Aram, giving him a paper. "there you will perceive that the sum mentioned is secured to you, the moment you quit this country. When shall that be? Let me entreat haste."

"Your prayer shall be granted. Before day break tomorrow, I will be on the road."

Aram's face brightened.

"There is my hand upon it," said Houseman, earnestly. "You may now rest assured that you are free of me for life. Go home—marry—enjoy your existence, as I have done. Within four days, if the wind set fair, I am in France."

"My business is done; I will believe you," said Aram, frankly and rising.

"You may," answered Houseman. "Stay—I will light you to the door. Devil and death—how the d—d candle flickers!"

Across the gloomy passage, as the candle now flared—and now was dulled—by quick fits and starts,—Houseman, after this brief conference, reconducted the student. And as Aram turned from the door, he flung his arms wildly aloft, and exclaimed, in the voice of one, from whose heart a load is lifted,—*"Now, now, for Madeline! I breathe freely at last!"*

Meanwhile, Houseman turned musingly back, and regained his room, muttering—

"Yes—yes—*my* business here is also done! Competence and safety abroad—after all, what a bugbear is this conscience!—fourteen years have rolled away—and lo! nothing discovered! nothing known! And easy circumstances—the very consequence of the deed—wait the remainder of my days: my child, too—my Jane—shall not want—shall not be a beggar nor a harlot."

So musing, Houseman threw himself contentedly on the chair, and the last flicker of the expiring light, as it

played upward on his rugged countenance, rested on one of those self-hugging smiles, with which a sanguine man contemplates a satisfactory future.

He had not been long alone before the door opened, and a woman with a light in her hand appeared. She was evidently intoxicated, and approached Houseman with a reeling and unsteady step.

"How now, Bess? drunk as usual! Get to bed, you she shark, go!"

"Tush, man, tush! don't talk to your betters," said the woman, sinking into a chair; and her situation, disgusting as it was, could not conceal the striking, though somewhat coarse beauty of her face and person.

Even Houseman (his heart being opened, as it were, by the cheering prospects of which his soliloquy had indulged the contemplation), was sensible of the effect of the mere physical attraction, and drawing his chair closer to her, he said in a tone less harsh than usual—

"Come, Bess, come, you must correct that d—d habit of yours; perhaps I may make a lady of you after all. What if I were to let you take a trip with me to France, old girl, eh; and let you set off that handsome face—for you are devilish handsome, and that's the truth of it—with some of the French gewgaws you women love? What if I were! would you be a good girl, eh?"

"I think I would, Dick,—I think I would," replied the woman, showing a set of teeth as white as ivory, with pleasure partly at the flattery, partly at the proposition: "you are a good fellow, Dick, that you are."

"Humph!" said Houseman, whose hard, shrewd mind was not easily cajoled; "but what's that paper in your bosom, Bess? A love-letter, I'll swear."

"'Tis to you then; came to you this morning, only somehow or

other, I forgot to give it you till now."

"Ha! a letter to me?" said Houseman, seizing the epistle in question. "Here! the Knarshen's postmark—my mother-in-law's crabbed hand, too! What can the old crone want?"

He opened the letter, and hastily scanning its contents, started up.

"Mercy, mercy!" cried he, "my child is dying. I may never see her again,—my only child,—the only thing that loves me,—that does not loathe me as a villain!"

"Hoyday, Dicky!" said the woman, clinging to him, "don't take on so;

who so fond of you as me!—what's a brat like that?"

"Curse on you, hag!" exclaimed Houseman, dashing her to the ground with a rude brutality: "*you* love me! Pah! My child—my little Jane—my pretty Jane—my merry Jane—my innocent Jane—I will seek her instantly—*instantly!* What's money! what's ease, —if—if—"

And the father, wretch, ruffian as he was, stung to the core of that last redeeming feeling of his dissolute nature, struck his breast with his clenched hand and rushed from the room—from the house.

CHAPTER VII.

MADLINE, HER HOPES.—A MILD AUTUMN CHARACTERISED.—A LANDSCAPE.—A RETURN.

"Tis late, and cold—stir up the fire,
Sit close, and draw the table nigher;
Be merry and drink wine that's old,
A hearty medicine 'gainst a cold;
Welcome—welcome shall fly round."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: *Song in the Lover's Progress.*

As when the great poet,

"Hopped the Stygian pool, though long
detain'd

In that obscure sojourn; while, in his
flight,

Through utter and through middle dark-
ness bore.

He sang of chaos and eternal night:—

as when, revisiting the "holy light, offspring of heaven's first-born," the sense of freshness and glory breaks upon him, and kindles into the ecstatic joyfulness of adoring song; as rises the mind from the contemplation of the gloom and gods of life, "the utter and the middle darkness," to some pure and bright redemption of our nature—some creature of "the starry threshold," "the regions mild of calm and serene air." Never was a nature more beautiful and soft than

that of Madeline Lester—never a nature more inclined to live "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot, which men call earth"—to commune with its own high and chaste creations of thought—to make a world out of the emotions which *this* world knows not—a paradise, which sin, and suspicion, and fear, had never yet invaded—where God might recognise no evil, and angels forebode no change.

Aram's return was now daily, nay, even hourly, expected. Nothing disturbed the soft, though thoughtful serenity, with which his betrothed relied upon the future. Aram's letters had been more deeply impressed with the evidence of love, than even his spoken vows; those letters had diffused not so much an agitated joy, as a full and mellow light of happiness

over her heart. Every thing, even nature, seemed inclined to smile with approbation on her hopes. The autumn had never, in the memory of man, worn so lovely a garment; the balmy and freshening warmth which sometimes characterises that period of the year was not broken, as yet, by the chilling winds, or the sullen mists, which speak to us so mournfully of the change that is creeping over the beautiful world. The summer visitants among the feathered tribe yet lingered in flocks, showing no intention of departure; and their song—but above all, the song of the skylark—which, to the old English poet, was what the nightingale is to the Eastern—seemed even to grow more cheerful as the sun shortened his daily task;—the very mulberry-tree, and the rich boughs of the horse-chestnut, retained something of their verdure; and the thousand glories of the woodland around Grassdale were still chequered with the golden hues that herald, but beautify, decay. Still no news had been received of Walter; and this was the only source of anxiety that troubled the domestic happiness of the manor-house. But the squire continued to remember that in youth he himself had been but a negligent correspondent; and the anxiety he felt had lately assumed rather the character of anger at Walter's forgetfulness, than of fear for his safety. There were moments when Ellinor silently mourned and pined; but she loved her sister not less even than her cousin; and in the prospect of Madeline's happiness did not too often question the future respecting her own.

One evening the sisters were sitting at their work by the window of the little parlour, and talking over various matters; of which the Great World, strange as it may seem, never made a part.

They conversed in a low tone; for

Lester sat by the hearth in which a wood fire had been just kindled, and appeared to have fallen into an afternoon slumber. The sun was sinking to repose, and the whole landscape lay before them bathed in light, till a cloud passing overhead darkened the heavens just immediately above them, and one of those beautiful sun showers, that rather characterise the spring than autumn, began to fall; the rain was rather sharp, and descended with a pleasant and freshening noise through the boughs, all shining in the sun-light: it did not, however, last long, and presently there sprang up the glorious rainbow, and the voices of the birds, which a minute before were mute, burst into a general chorus,—the last hymn of the declining day. The sparkling drops fell fast and gratefully from the trees, and over the whole scene there breathed an inexpressible sense of gladness,—

“The odour and the harmony of eve.”

“How beautiful!” said Ellinor, pausing from her work. “Ah, see the squirrel—is that our pet one?—he is coming close to the window, poor fellow! Stay, I will get him some bread.”

“Hush!” said Madeline, half rising, and turning quite pale; “do you hear a step without?”

“Only the dripping of the boughs,” answered Ellinor.

“No, no—it is he!”—it is he!” cried Madeline, the blood rushing back vividly to her cheeks. “I know his step!”

And yes—winding round the house till he stood opposite the window, the sisters now beheld Eugene Aram: the diamond rain glittered on the locks of his long hair; his cheeks were flushed by exercise, or more probably the joy of return: a smile, in which there was no shade or sadness, played over his features, which caught also a fictitious semblance of

gladness from the rays of the setting sun which fell full upon them.

"My Madeline! my love! my Madeline!" broke from his lips.

"You are returned—thank God—thank God—safe—well!"

"And happy!" added Aram, with a deep meaning in the tone of his voice.

"Hey day, hey day!" cried the

squire, starting up, "what's this! Bless me, Eugene!—wet through, too, seemingly! Nell, run and open the door—more wood on the fire—the pheasants for supper—and stay, girl, stay—there's the key of the cellar—the twenty-one port—you know it. Ah! ah! God willing, Eugene Aram shall not complain of his welcome back to Grassdale!"

CHAPTER VIII.

AFFECTION: ITS GODLIKE NATURE.—THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN ARAM AND MADELINE.—THE FATALIST FORGETS FATE.

"Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that,
And manage it against despairing thoughts."

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Is there be any thing thoroughly lovely in the human heart, it is affection! All that makes hope elevated, or fear generous, belongs to the capacity of loving. For my own part, I do not wonder, in looking over the thousand crowds and sorts of men, that so many religionists have traced their theology—that so many moralists have wrought their system—from love. The errors thus originated have something in them that charms us, even while we smile at the theology, or while we neglect the system. What a beautiful fæerie would be human nature—what a divine guide would be human reason—if love were indeed the stratum of the one, and the inspiration of the other! We are told of a picture by a great painter of old, in which an infant is represented suckling a mother wounded to the death, who, even in that agony, strove to prevent the child from injuring itself by imbibing the blood mingled with the milk.* How many

emotions, that might have made us permanently wiser and better, have we lost in losing that picture!

Certainly, love assumes a more touching and earnest semblance, when we find it in some retired and sequestered hollow of the world; when it is not mixed up with the daily frivolities and petty emotions of which a life passed in cities is so necessarily composed: we cannot but believe it a deeper and a more absorbing passion; perhaps we are not always right in the belief.

Had one of that order of angels to whom a knowledge of the future, or the seraphic penetration into the hidden heart of man is forbidden, stayed his wings over the lovely valley in which the main scene of our history has been cast, no spectacle might have seemed to him more appropriate to that pastoral spot, or more elevated in the character of its tenderness above the fierce and short-lived passions of the ordinary world, than the love that existed between Madeline and her betrothed. Their natures seemed so suited to each other! the

* "Intelligitur sentire mater et timere, ne & mortis lacte sanguinem lausset."

solemn and *undurnal* mood of the one was reflected back in hues so gentle, and yet so faithful, from the purer, but source less thoughtful, character of the other. Their sympathies ran through the same channel, and mingled in a common fount; and whatever was dark and troubled in the breast of Aram, was now suffered not to appear. Since his return, his mood was brighter and more tranquil, and he seemed better fitted to appreciate and respond to the peculiar tenderness of Madeline's affection. There are some stars which, viewed by the naked eye, seem one, but in reality are two separate orbs revolving round each other, and drinking, each from each, a separate yet united existence:—such stars seemed a type of them.

Had any thing been wanting to complete Madeline's happiness, the change in Aram supplied the want. The sudden starts, the abrupt changes of mood and countenance, that had formerly characterised him, were now scarcely, if ever, visible. He seemed to have resigned himself with confidence to the prospects of the future, and to have forsworn the haggard recollections of the past; he moved, and looked, and smiled like other men; he was alive to the little circumstances around him, and no longer absorbed in the contemplation of a separate and strange existence within himself. Some scattered fragments of his poetry bear the date of this time: they are chiefly addressed to Madeline; and, amidst the vows of love, a spark, sometimes of a wild and bursting, sometimes of a profound and collected happiness, are visible. There is great beauty in many of these fragments, and they bear a stronger evidence of *heart*—they breathe more of nature and truth, than the poetry that belongs of right to that time.

And thus day rolled on day, till it was now the eve before their bridals.

Aram had deemed it prudent to tell Lester that he had sold his annuity, and that he had applied to the earl for the pension which we have seen he had been promised. As to his supposed relation—the illness he had created he suffered now to cease; and indeed the approaching ceremony gave him a graceful excuse for turning the conversation away from any topics that did not relate to Madeline, or to that event.

It was the eve before their marriage: Aram and Madeline were walking along the valley that led to the house of the former.

"How fortunate it is," said Madeline, "that our future residence will be so near my father's. I cannot tell you with what delight he looks forward to the pleasant circle we shall make. Indeed, I think he would scarcely have consented to our wedding, if it had separated us from him."

Aram stopped, and plucked a flower.

"Ah! indeed, indeed, Madeline. Yet in the course of the various changes of life, how more than probable it is that we shall be divided from him—that we shall leave this spot."

"It is possible, certainly; but not probable: is it, Eugene?"

"Would it grieve thee, irremediably, dearest, were it so?" rejoined Aram, evasively.

"Irremediably! What could grieve me irremediably that did not happen to you?"

"Should, then, circumstances occur to induce us to leave this part of the country, for one yet more remote, you could submit cheerfully to the change?"

"I should weep for my father—I should weep for Ellinor; but ——"

"But what?"

"I should comfort myself in thinking that you would then be yet more to me than ever!"

"Dearest!"

"But why do you speak thus, only to try me? Ah! that is needless."

"So, my Madeline, I have no doubt of your affection. When you loved such as me, I knew at once how blind, how devoted must be that love. You were not won through the usual avenues to a woman's heart; neither wit nor gaiety, nor youth nor beauty, did you behold in me. Whatever attracted you towards me, that which must have been sufficiently powerful to make you overlook these ordinary differences, will be also sufficiently enduring to resist all ordinary changes. But listen, Madeline. Do not yet ask me wherefore; but I fear, that a certain fatality will constrain us to leave this spot very shortly after our wedding."

"How disappointed my poor father will be!" said Madeline, sighing.

"Do not, on any account, mention this conversation to him, or to Ellinor; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

Madeline wontered, but said no

more. There was a pause for some minutes.

"Do you remember," observed Madeline, "that it was about here we met that strange man whom you had formerly known?"

"Ha! was it?—Here, was it?"

"What has become of him?"

"He is abroad, I hope," said Aram, calmly. "Yes, let me think; by this time he *must* be in France. Dearest, let us rest here on this dry mossy bank for a little while," and Aram drew his arm round her waist, and, his countenance brightening as if with some thought of increasing joy, he poured out anew those protestations of love, and those anticipations of the future, which befitted the eve of a morrow so full of auspicious promise.

The heaven of their fate seemed calm and glowing, and Aram did not dream that the one small cloud of fear which was set within it, and which he alone beheld afar, and unprophetic of the storm, was charged with the thunderbolt of a doom he had protracted, not escaped.

CHAPTER IX.

WALTER AND THE CORPORAL ON THE ROAD.—THE EVENING SETS IN.—THE GIPSY TENTS.—ADVENTURE WITH THE HORSEMAN.—THE CORPORAL DISCOMFITED, AND THE ARRIVAL AT KNARESBRO'.

"Long had he wandered, when from far he sees
A ruddy flame that gleam'd betwixt the trees.
——— Sir Gawaine prays him tell
Where lies the road to princely Carduel"—*The Knight of the Sword.*

"WELL, Bunting, we are not far from our night's resting place," said Walter, pointing to a milestone on the road.

"The poor beast will be glad when we gets there, your honour," answered the corporal, wiping his brow.

"Which beast, Bunting?"

"Augh!—now your honour's severe! I am glad to see you so merry."

Walter sighed heavily; there was no mirth at his heart at that moment.

"Pray, sir," said the corporal, after a pause, "if not too bold, has your honour heard how they be doing at Grassdale?"

"No, Bunting; I have not held any correspondence with my uncle since our departure. Once I wrote to him on setting off to Yorkshire, but I could give him no direction to write to me again. The fact is, that I have been so sanguine in this search, and from day to day I have been so led on in tracing a clue, which I fear is now broken, that I have constantly put off writing till I could communicate that certain intelligence which I flattered myself I should be able ere this to procure. However, if we are unsuccessful at Knaresbro', I shall write from that place a detailed account of our proceedings."

"And I hopes you will say as how I have given your honour satisfaction."

"Depend upon that."

"Thank you, sir, thank you humbly; I would not like the squire to think I'm ungrateful!—augh, and mayhap I may have more cause to be grateful by and by, whenever the squire, God bless him! in consideration of your honour's good offices, should let me have the bit cottage rent free."

"A man of the world, Bunting; a man of the world!"

"Your honour's mighty oblesing," said the corporal, putting his hand to his hat; "I wonders," renewed he, after a short pause, "I wonders how poor neighbour Dealtry is. He was a sufferer last year; I should like to know how Peter be getting on—'tis a good creature."

Somewhat surprised at this sudden sympathy on the part of the corporal, for it was seldom that Bunting expressed kindness for any one, Walter replied,—

"When I write, Bunting, I will not fail to inquire how Peter Dealtry is;—does your kind heart suggest any other message to him?"

"Only to ask arter Jacobina, poor thing: she might get herself into trouble if little Peter fell sick and neglected her like—augh! And I hopes as how Peter airs the bit cottage now and then; but the squire, God bless him! will see to that and the tato garden, I'm sure."

"You may rely on that, Bunting," said Walter, sinking into a reverie, from which he was shortly roused by the corporal.

"I expose Miss Madeline be married afore now, your honour! Well, pray Heaven she be happy with that ere learned man!"

Walter's heart beat faster for a moment at this sudden remark, but he was pleased to find that the time when the thought of Madeline's marriage was accompanied with painful emotion was entirely gone by; the reflection, however, induced a new train of idea, and without replying to the corporal, he sank into a deeper meditation than before.

The shrewd Bunting saw that it was not a favourable moment for renewing the conversation; he therefore suffered his horse to fall back, and taking a quid from his tobacco-box, was soon as well entertained as his master. In this manner they rode on for about a couple of miles, the evening growing darker as they proceeded, when a green opening in the road brought them within view of a gipsy's encampment; the scene was so sudden and picturesque, that it aroused the young traveller from his reverie, and as his tired horse walked slowly on, the bridle about its neck, he looked with an earnest eye on the vagrant settlement beside his path. The moon had just risen above a dark copse in the rear and cast a broad, deep shadow along the green, without lessening the vivid effect of the fires which glowed and sparkled in the darker recesses of the waste land, as the gloomy forms of the Egyptians were seen dimly cowering round the blaze. A scene of this sort is, perhaps, one of the most striking that the green lanes of old England afford,—to me it has always an irresistible attraction, partly from its own charms, partly from those of association. When I was a mere boy, and bent on a soli-

tary excursion over parts of England and Scotland, I saw something of that wild people,—though not perhaps so much as the ingenious George Hauger, to whose memoirs the reader may be referred for some rather amusing pages on gipsy life. As Walter was still eyeing the encampment, he in return had not escaped the glance of an old crone, who came running hastily up to him, and begged permission to tell his fortune and to have her hand crossed with silver.

Very few men under thirty ever sincerely refuse an offer of this sort. Nobody believes in these predictions, yet every one likes hearing them: and Walter, after faintly refusing the proposal twice, consented the third time: and drawing up his horse, submitted his hand to the old lady. In the meanwhile, one of the younger urchins who had accompanied her had run to the encampments for a light, and now stood behind the old woman's shoulder, rearing on high a pine brand, which cast over the little group a red and weird-like glow.

The reader must not imagine we are now about to call his credulity in aid to eke out any interest he may feel in our story; the old crone was but a vulgar gipsy, and she predicted to Walter the same fortune she always predicted to those who paid a shilling for the prophecy—an heiress with blue eyes—seven children—troubles about the epoch of forty-three, happily soon over—and a healthy old age, with an easy death. Though Walter was not impressed with any reverential awe for these vaticinations, he yet could not refrain from inquiring whether the journey on which he was at present bent was likely to prove successful in its object.

"'Tis an ill night," said the old woman, lifting up her wild face and olden looks with a mysterious air—" 'Tis an ill night for them as seeks, and for them as asks.—He's about —"

"He—who?"

"No matter!—you may be successful, young sir, yet wish you had not been so. The moon thus, and the wind there—promise that you will get your desires, and find them crosses."

The corporal had listened very attentively to these predictions, and was now about to thrust forth his own hand to the soothsayer, when from a cross road to the right came the sound of hoofs, and presently a horseman at full trot pulled up beside them.

"Hark ye, old she devil, or you, sir—is this the road to Knaresbro'?"

The gipsey drew back, and gazed on the countenance of the rider, on which the red glare of the pine-brand shone full.

"To Knaresbro', Richard, the dare-devil! Ay, and what does the ramping bird want in the old nest? Welcome back to Yorkshire, Richard, my ben-cove!"

"Ha!" said the rider, shading his eyes with his hand, as he returned the gaze of the gipsey—"is it you, Bess Airlie?—your welcome is like the owl's, and reads the wrong way. But I must not stop. This takes to Knaresbro', then?"

"Straight as a dying man's curse to hell," replied the crone, in that metaphorical style in which all her tribe love to speak, and of which their proper language is indeed almost wholly composed.

The horseman answered not, but spurred on.

"Who is that?" asked Walter, earnestly, as the old woman stretched her tawny neck after the rider.

"An old friend, sir," replied the Egyptian, drily. "I have not seen him these fourteen years; but it is not Bess Airlie who is apt to forget friend or foe. Well, sir, shall I tell your honour's good luck?"—(here she turned to the corporal, who sat erect on his saddle, with his hand on his holster.)—"the colour of the lady's hair—and —"

"Hold your tongue, you limb of Satan!" interrupted the corporal, fiercely, as if his whole tide of thought, so lately favourable to the soothsayer, had undergone a deadly reversion. "Please your honour, it's getting late, we had better be jogging!"

"You are right," said Walter, spurring his jaded horse; and, nodding his adieu to the gipsey, he was soon out of sight of the encampment.

"Sir," said the corporal, joining his master, "that is a man as I have seen afore; I knowed his ugly face again in a crack—'tis the man what came to Grassdale arter Mr. Aram, and we saw arterwards the night we chanced on Sir Peter Thingumbob."

"Bunting," said Walter, in a low voice, "I too have been trying to recall the face of that man, and I too am persuaded I have seen it before. A fearful suspicion, amounting almost to conviction, creeps over me, that the hour in which I last saw it was one when my life was in peril. In a word, I do believe that I beheld that face bending over me on the night when I lay under the hedge, and so nearly escaped murder! If I am right, it was, however, the mildest of the ruffians; the one who counselled his comrades against despatching me."

The corporal shuddered.

"Pray, sir," said he, after a moment's pause, "do see if your pistols are primed:—so—so. 'Tis not out o' nature that the man may have some 'complices hereabout, and may think to waylay us. The old gipsey, too, what a face she had! Depend on it, they are two of a trade—ugh!—bother!—whaugh!"

And the corporal grunted his most significant grunt.

"It is not at all unlikely, Bunting; and as we are now not far from Knaresbro', it will be prudent to ride on as fast as our horses will allow us. Keep up alongside."

"Certainly—I'll protect your honour," said the corporal, getting on that side where the hedge being thinnest, an ambush was less likely to be laid. "I care more for your honour's safety than my own, or what a brute I should be—*augh!*"

The master and man trotted on for some little distance, when they perceived a dark object moving along by the grass on the side of the road. The corporal's hair bristled—he uttered an oath, which he mistook for a prayer. Walter felt his breath grow a little thick as he watched the motions of the object so imperfectly beheld; presently, however, it grew into a man on horseback, trotting very slowly along the grass; and as they now neared him, they recognised the rider they had just seen, whom they might have imagined, from the pace at which he left them before, to have been considerably ahead of them.

The horseman turned round as he saw them.

"Pray, gentlemen," said he, in a tone of great and evident anxiety, "how far is it to Knaresbro'?"

"Don't answer him, your honour," whispered the corporal.

"Probably," replied Walter, unheeding this advice, "you know this road better than we do. It cannot, however, be above three or four miles hence."

"Thank you, sir,—it is long since I have been in these parts. I used to know the country, but they have made new roads and strange enclosures, and I now scarcely recognise anything familiar. Curse on this brute! curse on it, I say!" repeated the horseman through his ground teeth, in a tone of angry vehemence. "I never wanted to ride so quick before, and the beast has fallen as lame as a tree. This *curse* of trying to go faster than other folks—*Six* are you a father?"

This abrupt question, which was uttered in a sharp, strained voice, a

little startled Walter. He replied shortly in the negative, and was about to spur onward, when the horseman continued—and there was something in his voice and manner that compelled attention,—

"And I am in doubt whether I have a child or not.—By *G—* it is a bitter gnawing state of mind.—I may reach Knaresbro' to find my only daughter dead, sir!—*dead!*"

Despite Walter's suspicions of the speaker, he could not but feel a thrill of sympathy at the visible distress with which these words were said.

"I hope not," said he, involuntarily.

"Thank you, sir," replied the horseman, trying ineffectually to spur on his steed, which almost came down at the effort to proceed. "I have ridden thirty miles across the country at full speed, for they had no post-horses at the *d—d* place where I hired this brute. This was the only creature I could get for love or money; and now the devil only knows how important every moment may be. While I speak, my child may breathe her last!" And the man brought his clenched fist on the shoulder of his horse in mingled spite and rage.

"All sham, your honour," whispered the corporal.

"Sir," cried the horseman, now raising his voice, "I need not have asked if you had been a father—if you had, you would have had compassion on me ere this,—you would have lent me your own horse."

"The impudent rogue!" muttered the corporal.

"Sir," replied Walter, "it is not to the tale of every stranger that a man gives belief."

"Belief!—ah, well, well, 'tis no matter," said the horseman, sullenly. "There was a time, man, when I would have forced what I now solicit; but my heart's gone. Ride on, sir—ride on,—and the curse of —"

"If," interrupted Walter, irresolutely, "if I could believe your statement—but no. Mark me, sir. I have reasons—fearful reasons, for imagining you mean this but as a snare!"

"Ha!" said the horseman, deliberately, "have we met before?"

"I believe so."

"And you have had cause to complain of me? It may be—it may be: but were the grave before me, and if one lie would smite me into it, I solemnly swear that I now utter but the naked truth."

"It would be folly to trust him, Bunting?" said Walter, turning round to his attendant.

"Folly!—sheer madness—bother!"

"If you are the man I take you for," said Walter, "you once raised your voice against the murder, though you assisted in the robbery, of a traveller:—that traveller was myself. I will remember the mercy—I will forget the outrage; and I will not believe that you have devised this tale as a snare. Take my horse, sir; I will trust you."

Houseman, for it was he, flung himself instantly from his saddle. "I don't ask God to bless you: a blessing in my mouth would be worse than a curse. But you will not repent this: you will not repent it!"

Houseman said these few words with a palpable emotion; and it was more striking on account of the evident coarseness and hardened brutality of his nature. In a moment more he had mounted Walter's horse, and turning ere he sped on, inquired at what place at Knaresborough the horse should be sent. Walter directed him to the principal inn; and Houseman, waving his hand, and striking his spurs into the animal, wearied as it was, shot out of sight in a moment.

"Well, if ever I seed the like!" quoth the corporal. "Lira, lira, la.

la, la! lira, lira, la, la, la!—augh!—waugh!—bother!"

"So my good nature does not please you, Bunting!"

"Oh, sir, it does not signify: we shall have our throats cut—that's all."

"What, you don't believe the story?"

"I! Bless your honour, I am no fool."

"Bunting!"

"Sir."

"You forget yourself."

"Augh!"

"So you don't think I should have lent the horse?"

"Sartainly not."

"On occasions like these, every man ought to take care of himself! Prudence before generosity!"

"Of a sartainty, sir!"

"Dismount, then,—I want my horse. You may shift with the lame one."

"Augh, sir,—baugh!"

"Rascal, dismount, I say!" said Walter angrily: for the corporal was one of those men who aim at governing their masters; and his selfishness now irritated Walter as much as his impertinent tone of superior wisdom.

The corporal hesitated. He thought an ambuscade by the road of certain occurrence; and he was weighing the danger of riding a lame horse against his master's displeasure. Walter, perceiving he demurred, was seized with so violent a resentment, that he dashed up to the corporal, and grasping him by the collar, swung him, heavy as he was,—being wholly unprepared for such force,—to the ground.

Without deigning to look at his condition, Walter mounted the sound horse, and throwing the bridle of the lame one over a bough, left the corporal to follow at his leisure.

There is not, perhaps, a more sore state of mind than that which we experience when we have committed an act we meant to be generous, and fear to be foolish.

"Certainly," said Walter, soliloquizing, "certainly the man is a rascal; yet he was obviously sincere in his emotion. Certainly he was one of the men who robbed me; yet, if so, he was also the one who interceded for my life. If I should now have given strength to a villain;—if I should have assisted him to an outrage against myself! What more probable? Yet, on the other hand, if his story be true,—if his child be dying,—and if, through my means, he obtain a last interview with her! Well, well, let me hope so!"

Here he was joined by the corporal,

who, angry as he was, judged it prudent to smother his rage for another opportunity; and by favouring his master with his company, to procure himself an ally immediately at hand, should his suspicions prove true. But for once, his knowledge of the world deceived him: no sign of living creature broke the loneliness of the way. By and by the lights of the town gleamed upon them; and, on reaching the inn, Walter found his horse had been already sent there, and, covered with dust and foam, was submitting itself to the tutelary hands of the hostler.

CHAPTER X.

WALTER'S REFLECTIONS.—MINE HOST.—A GENTLE CHARACTER AND A GREEN OLD AGE.—THE GARDEN, AND THAT WHICH IT TRACETH.—A DIALOGUE WHEREIN NEW HINTS TOWARDS THE WISHED-FOR DISCOVERY ARE SUGGESTED.—THE CURATE.—A VISIT TO A SPOT OF DEEP INTEREST TO THE ADVENTURER.

"I made a pray while the day ran by,
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band,"—GRONUX HERBERT.

" . . . The time approaches,
That will with due precision make us know
What ——" *Macbeth*.

The next morning Walter rose early, and descending into the court yard of the inn he there met with the landlord, who—a hoe in his hand—was just about to enter a little gate that led into the garden. He held the gate open for Walter.

"It is a fine morning, sir; would you like to look into the garden?" said mine host, with an inviting smile.

Walter accepted the offer, and found himself in a large and well-stocked garden, laid out with much neatness and some taste; the landlord halted by a parterre which required his

attention, and Walter walked on in solitary reflection.

The morning was serene and clear, but the frost mingled the freshness with an "eager and nipping air;" and Walter unconsciously quickened his step as he passed to and fro the straight walk that bisected the garden, with his eyes on the ground, and his hat over his brows.

Now then he had reached the place where the last trace of his father seemed to have vanished; in how wayward and strange a manner! If no further clue could be here discovered by the inquiry he purpose

at this spot would terminate his researches and his hopes. But the young heart of the traveller was buoyed up with expectation. Looking back to the events of the last few weeks, he thought he recognised the finger of Destiny guiding him from step to step, and now resting on the scene to which it had brought his feet. How singularly complete had been the train of circumstance, which, linking things seemingly most trifling, most dissimilar, had lengthened into one continuous chain of evidence! the trivial incident that led him to the saddler's shop; the accident that brought the whip that had been his father's to his eye; the account from Courtland, which had conducted him to this remote part of the country; and now the narrative of Elmore leading him to the spot, at which all inquiry seemed as yet to pause! Had he been led hither only to hear repeated that strange tale of sudden and wanton disappearance—to find an abrupt wall, a blank and impenetrable barrier to a course hitherto so continuously guided on? Had he been the sport of Fate, and not its instrument? No; he was filled with a serious and profound conviction, that a discovery which he of all men was best entitled by the unalienable claims of blood and birth to achieve was reserved for him, and that this grand dream of childhood was now about to be embodied and attained. He could not but be sensible, too, that as he had proceeded on his high enterprise, his character had acquired a weight and a thoughtful seriousness, which was more fitted to the nature of that enterprise than akin to his earlier temper. This consciousness swelled his bosom with a profound and steady hope. When Fate selects her human agents, her dark and mysterious spirit is at work within them; she moulds their hearts, she exalts their energies, she shapes

them to the part she has allotted them, and renders the mortal instrument worthy of the solemn end.

Thus chewing the end of his involved and deep reflections, the young adventurer paused at last opposite his host, who was still bending over his pleasant task, and every now and then, excited by the exercise and the fresh morning air, breaking into stanzas of some old rustic song. The contrast in mood between himself and this

"Unwea'd boiterer by the world's green ways,"

struck forcibly upon him. Mine host, too, was one whose appearance was better suited to his occupation than his profession. He might have told some three-and-sixty years, but it was a comely and green old age; his cheek was firm and ruddy, not with nightly cups, but the fresh witness of the morning breezes it was wont to court; his frame was robust, not corpulent; and his long grey hair, which fell almost to his shoulders, his clear blue eyes, and a pleasant curve in a mouth characterised by habitual good humour, completed a portrait that even many a dull observer would have paused to gaze upon. And, indeed, the good man enjoyed a certain kind of reputation for his comely looks and cheerful manner. His picture had even been taken by a young artist in the neighbourhood; nay, the likeness had been multiplied into engravings, somewhat rude and somewhat unfaithful, which might be seen occupying no unobtrusive nor dusty corner in the principal printshop of the town: nor was mine host's character a contradiction to his looks. He had seen enough of life to be intelligent, and had judged it rightly enough to be kind. He had passed that line so nicely given to man's codes in those admirable pages which first added delicacy of tact to the strong sense of English composition. "We have just

which is enough." It is said somewhere in *The Spectator*, "to make us hate, but not enough to make us love, one another." Our good landlord, peace be with his ashes! had never halted at this limit. The country innkeeper might have furnished Goldsmith with a counterpart to his country curate; his house was equally hospitable to the poor—his heart equally tender in a nature wiser than experience, to error, and equally open, in its warm simplicity, to distress. Peace be with thee * * * * *. Our grandsire was thy patron—yet a patron thou didst not want. Merit in thy capacity is seldom bare of reward. The public want no indicators to a house like thine. And who requires a third person to tell him how to appreciate the value of good nature and good cheer?

As Walter stood and contemplated the old man bending over the sweet forest earth, and then, glancing round, saw the quiet garden stretching away on either side with its boundaries lost among the thick evergreen, something of that grateful and moralising stillness, with which some country scene generally inspires us, when we awake to its consciousness from the troubled dream of dark and unquiet thought, stole over his mind; and certain old lines which his uncle, who loved the soft and rustic morality that pervades the ancient race of English minstrels, had taught him, when a boy, came pleasantly into his recollection:—

"With all, as in some rare limned book, we see

How painted lectures of God's sacred will,
How duty teacheth lowliness of mind;
How amiable, we should be patient still;
How true, our hate of vice's poison ill;
The wisdom, that we should our friend
Keep honest.

Our hope the caviary in the bitterest cold."*

The old man stopped from his

* Henry Peacham.

work, as the musing figure of his guest darkened the prospect before him, and said,—

"A pleasant time, sir, for the gardener!"

"Ay, is it so? You must miss the fruits and flowers of summer."

"Well, sir,—but we are now paying back the garden for the good things it has given us. It is like taking care of a friend in old age, who has been kind to us when he was young."

Walter smiled at the quaint amiability of the idea.

"'Tis a winning thing, sir, a garden! It brings us an object every day; and that's what I think a man ought to have if he wishes to lead a happy life."

"It is true," said Walter; and mine host was encouraged to continue by the attention and affable countenance of the stranger, for he was a physiognomist in his way.

"And then, sir, we have no disappointment in these objects,—the soil is not ungrateful, as they say men are—though I have not often found them so, by the by. What we sow we reap. I have an old book, sir, lying in my little parlour, all about fishing, and full of so many pretty sayings about a country life, and meditation, and so forth, that it does one as much good as a sermon to look into it. But to my mind, all those sayings are more applicable to a gardener's life than a fisherman's."

"It is a less cruel life, certainly," said Walter.

"Yes, sir; and then the scenes one makes one's self, the flowers one plants with one's own hand, one enjoys more than all the beauties which don't owe us any thing: at least so it seems to me. I have always been thankful to the accident that made me take to gardening."

"And what was that?"

"Why, sir, you must know there was a great scholar, though he was

but a youth then, living in this town some years ago, and he was very curious in plants, and flowers, and such like. I have heard the parson say, he knew more of those innocent matters than any man in this county. At that time I was not in so flourishing a way of business as I am at present. I kept a little inn in the outskirts of the town; and having formerly been a gamekeeper of my Lord——'s, I was in the habit of eking out my little profits by accompanying gentlemen in fishing or snipe-shooting. So one day, sir, I went out fishing with a strange gentleman from London, and, in a very quiet retired spot some miles off, he stopped and plucked some herbs that seemed to me common enough, but which he declared were most curious and rare things, and he carried them carefully away. I heard afterwards he was a great herbalist, I think they call it, but he was a very poor fisher. Well, sir, I thought the next morning of Mr. Aram, our great scholar and botanist, and fancied it would please him to know of these bits of grass: so I went and called upon him, and begged leave to go and show the spot to him. So we walked there; and certainly, sir, of all the men that ever I saw, I never met one that wound round your heart like this same Eugene Aram. He was then exceedingly poor, but he never complained; and was much too proud for any one to dare to offer him relief. He lived quite alone, and usually avoided every one in his walks; but, sir, there was something so engaging and patient in his manner, and his voice, and his pale, mild countenance, which, young as he was then, for he was not a year or two above twenty, was marked with sadness and melancholy, that it quite went to your heart when you met him or spoke to him.—Well, sir, we walked to the place, and very much delighted he seemed with the green things I

showed him; and as I was always of a communicative temper—rather a gossip, sir, my neighbours say—I made him smile now and then by my remarks. He seemed pleased with me, and talked to me going home about flowers, and gardening, and such like; and sure it was better than a book to hear him. And after that, when we came across one another, he would not shun me as he did others, but let me stop and talk to him; and then I asked his advice about a wee farm I thought of taking, and he told me many curious things which, sure enough, I found quite true, and brought me in afterwards a deal of money. But we talked much about gardening, for I loved to hear him talk on those matters; and so, sir, I was struck by all he said, and could not rest till I took to gardening myself, and ever since I have gone on, more pleased with it every day of my life. Indeed, sir, I think these harmless pursuits make a man's heart better and kinder to his fellow-creatures; and I always take more pleasure in reading the Bible, specially the New Testament, after having spent the day in the garden. Ah, well, I should like to know what has become of that poor gentleman."

"I can relieve your honest heart about him. Mr. Aram is living in * * *, well off in the world, and universally liked; though he still keeps to his old habits of reserve."

"Ay, indeed, sir! I have not heard any thing that pleased me more this many a day."

"Pray," said Walter, after a moment's pause; "do you remember the circumstance of a Mr. Clarke appearing in this town, and leaving it in a very abrupt and mysterious manner?"

"Do I mind it, sir! Yea, indeed. It made a great noise in Knaresbro'—there were many suspicions of foul play about it. For my part, I too had my thoughts, but that's neither

here nor there," and the old man recommenced wooding with great diligence.

"My friend," said Walter, mastering his emotion, "you would serve me more deeply than I can express, if you would give me any information, any conjecture respecting this—this Mr. Clarke. I have come hither, solely to make inquiry after his fate—in a word, he is—or was—a near relative of mine?"

The old man looked wistfully in Walter's face. "Indeed," said he, slowly, "you are welcome, sir, to all I know; but that is very little, or nothing rather. But will you turn up this walk, sir? it's more retired. Did you ever hear of one Richard Houseman?"

"Houseman! yes. He knew my poor —, I mean he knew Clarke: he said Clarke was in his debt when he left the town so suddenly."

The old man shook his head mysteriously, and looked round. "I will tell you," said he, laying his hand on Walter's arm, and speaking in his ear; "I would not accuse any one wrongfully, but I have my doubts that Houseman murdered him."

"Great God!" murmured Walter, clinging to a post for support. "Go on—heed me not—heed me not—for money's sake go on."

"Say, I know nothing certain—nothing certain, believe me," said the old man, checked at the effort his words had produced: "it may be truer than I think for, and my reasons are not very strong, but you shall hear them. "Mr. Clarke, you know, came to this town to receive a legacy—you know the particulars?"

Walter impatiently nodded assent.

"Well, though he seemed in poor health, he was a lively curious man, who liked any company who would sit and tell stories, and drink o' nights; not a silly man exactly, but a weak one. Now of all the idle persons of

this town, Richard Houseman was the most inclined to this way of life. He had been a soldier—had wandered a good deal about the world—was a bold, talking, reckless fellow—of a character thoroughly profligate, and there were many stories about about him, though none were clearly made out. In short, he was suspected of having occasionally taken to the high road; and a stranger, who stopped once at my little inn, assured me privately, that though he could not positively swear to his person, he felt convinced that he had been stopped a year before on the London road by Houseman. Notwithstanding all this, as Houseman had some respectable connexions in the town—among his relations, by the by, was Mr. Aram—as he was a thoroughly boon companion—a good shot—a bold rider—excellent at a song, and very cheerful and merry, he was not without as much company as he pleased; and the first night he and Mr. Clarke came together, they grew mighty intimate; indeed it seemed as if they had met before. On the night Mr. Clarke disappeared, I had been on an excursion with some gentlemen; and in consequence of the snow which had been heavy during the latter part of the day, I did not return to Knarebro' till past midnight. In walking through the town, I perceived two men engaged in earnest conversation: one of them, I am sure, was Clarke; the other was wrapped up in a great coat, with the cape over his face, but the watchman had met the same man alone at an earlier hour, and, putting aside the cape, perceived that it was Houseman. No one else was seen with Clarke after that hour."

"But was not Houseman examined?"

"Slightly, and deposed that he had been spending the night with Eugene Aram; that on leaving Aram's house, he met Clarke, and wondering

that he, the latter, an invalid, should be out at so late an hour, he walked some way with him, in order to learn the cause; but that Clarke seemed confused, and was reserved, and on his guard, and at last wished him good-by abruptly, and turned away. That he, Houseman, had no doubt he left the town that night, with the intention of defrauding his creditors, and making off with some jewels he had borrowed from Mr. Elmore."

"But, Aram—was this suspicious, nay, abandoned character—this Houseman—inmate with Aram?"

"Not at all; but being distantly related, and Houseman being a familiar, pushing sort of a fellow, Aram could not, perhaps, always shake him off; and Aram allowed that Houseman had spent the evening with him."

"And no suspicion rested on Aram?"

The host turned round in amazement.—"Heavens above, no! One might as well suspect the lamb of eating the wolf!"

But not thus thought Walter Lester: the wild words occasionally uttered by the student—his lone habits—his frequent starts and colloquy with self, all of which had, even from the first, it has been seen, excited Walter's suspicion of former guilt, that had murdered the mind's wholesome sleep, now rushed with tenfold force upon his memory.

"But no other circumstance transpired? Is this your whole ground for suspicion; the mere circumstance of Houseman's being last seen with Clarke?"

"Consider also the dissolute and bold character of Houseman. Clarke evidently had his jewels and money with him—they were not left in the house. What a temptation to one who was more than suspected of having in the course of his life taken to plunder! Houseman shortly afterwards left the country. He has never returned to the town since, though

his daughter lives here with his wife's mother, and has occasionally gone up to town to see him.

"And Aram—he also left Knarcsbro' soon after this mysterious event?"

"Yes! an old aunt at York, who had never assisted him during her life, died and bequeathed him a legacy, about a month afterwards. On receiving it, he naturally went to London—the best place for such clever scholars."

"Ha! But are you sure that the aunt died? that the legacy was left? Might this be no tale to give an excuse to the spending of money otherwise acquired?"

Mine host looked almost with anger on Walter.

"It is clear," said he, "you know nothing of Eugene Aram, or you would not speak thus. But I can satisfy your doubts on this head. I knew the old lady well, and my wife was at York when she died. Besides, every one here knows something of the will, for it was rather an eccentric one."

Walter paused irresolutely. "Will you accompany me," he asked, "to the house in which Mr. Clarke lodged,—and, indeed, to any other place where it may be prudent to institute inquiry?"

"Certainly, sir, with the biggest pleasure," said mine host; "but you must first try my dame's butter and eggs. It is time to breakfast."

We may suppose that Walter's simple meal was soon over; and growing impatient and restless to commence his inquiries, he descended from his solitary apartment to the little back-room behind the bar, in which he had, on the night before, seen mine host and his better half at supper. It was a snug, small wainscoted room; fishing-rods were neatly arranged against the wall, which was also decorated by a portrait of the landlord himself, two old Dutch pic-

trees of fruit and game, a long, quaint-fashioned fowling piece, and, opposite the fire-place, a noble stag's head and antlers. On the window seat lay the Isaac Walton to which the old man had referred, the Family Bible, with its green baize cover, and the frequent marks peeping out from its venerable pages; and, close nestling to it, recalling that beautiful sentence, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," several of those little volumes with gray bindings, and marvellous contents of fay and giant, which delight the hearth-spelled urchin, and which were "the source of golden hours" to the old man's grand-children, in their respite from "learning's little tene-ments,"—

"Where sits the dame, disguised in look profound,

And eyes her fury throng, and turns her wheel around?"

Mine host was still employed by a huge brown loaf and some baked pike; and mine hostess, a quiet and serene old lady, was alternately regaling herself and a large brindled cat from a plate of "toasten cheer."

While the old man was hastily concluding his repast, a little knock at the door was heard, and presently an elderly gentleman in black put his head into the room, and, perceiving the stranger, would have drawn back; but both landlady and landlord, bustling up, entreated him to enter by the appellation of Mr. Summerson. And then, as the gentleman smilingly yielded to the invitation, the landlady, turning to Walter, said,—“Our clergyman, sir; and though I say it afore his face, there is not a man who, if Christian virtues were considered, ought so soon to be a bishop.”

“Hush! my good lady,” said Mr. Summerson, laughing as he bowed to Walter. “You see, sir, that it is no

trifling advantage to a Knaresbro’ reputation to have our hostess’s good word. But, indeed,” turning to the landlady, and assuming a grave and impressive air, “I have little mind for jesting now. You know poor Jane Houseman,—a mild, quiet, blue-eyed creature,—she died at daybreak this morning! Her father had come from London expressly to see her: she died in his arms, and, I hear, he is almost in a state of frenzy.”

The host and hostess signified their commiseration. “Poor little girl!” said the latter, wiping her eyes: “her’s was a hard fate, and she felt it, child as she was. Without the care of a mother—and such a father! Yet he was fond of her.”

“My reason for calling on you was this,” renewed the clergyman, addressing the host: “you knew Houseman formerly, me he always shunned, and, I fancy, ridiculed. He is in distress now, and all that is forgotten. Will you seek him, and inquire if any thing in my power can afford him consolation? He may be poor: I can pay for the poor child’s burial. I loved her; she was the best girl at Mrs. Summerson’s school.”

“Certainly, sir, I will seek him,” said the landlord, hesitating; and then, drawing the clergyman aside, he informed him in a whisper of his engagement with Walter, and with the present pursuit and meditated inquiry of his guest; not forgetting to insinuate his suspicion of the guilt of the man whom he was now called upon to compassionate.

The clergyman mused a little; and then, approaching Walter, offered his services in the stead of the publican in so frank and cordial a manner, that Walter at once accepted them.

“Let us come now, then,” said the good curate—for he was but the curate—seeing Walter’s impatience; “and first we will go to the house in which Clarke lodged: I know it well.”

The two gentlemen now commenced their expedition. Summers was no contemptible antiquary; and he sought to beguile the nervous impatience of his companion by dilating on the attractions of the ancient and memorable town to which his purpose had brought him.

"Remarkable," said the curate, "alike in history and tradition: look yonder" (pointing above, as an opening in the road gave to view the frowning and beetled ruins of the shattered castle); "you would be at some loss to recognise now the truth of old Leland's description of that once stout and gallant bulwark of the North, when he 'numbrid 11 or 12 towres in the walles of the castel, and one very fayre beside in the second area.' In that castle, the four knightly murderers of the haughty Becket (the Wolsey of his age) remained for a whole year, defying the weak justice of the times. There, too, the unfortunate Richard the Second—the Stuart of the Plantagenets—passed some portion of his bitter imprisonment. And there, after the battle of Marston Moor, waved the banners of the loyalists against the soldiers of Lilburne. It was made yet more touchingly memorable at that time, as you may have heard, by an instance of filial piety. The town was greatly straitened for want of provisions; a youth, whose father was in the garrison, was accustomed nightly to get into the deep dry moat, climb up the glacis, and put provisions through a hole, where the father stood ready to receive them. He was perceived at length; the soldiers fired on him. He was taken prisoner and sentenced to be hanged in sight of the besieged, in order to strike terror into those who might be similarly disposed to render assistance to the garrison. Fortunately, however, this disgrace was spared the memory of Lilburne and the republican arms. With great

difficulty, a certain lady obtained him respite; and after the conquest of the place, and the departure of the troops, the adventurous son was released."

"A fit subject for your local poets," said Walter, whom stories of this sort, from the nature of his own enterprise, especially affected.

"Yes; but we boast but few minstrels since the young Aram left us. The castle then, once the residence of John of Gaunt, was dismantled and destroyed. Many of the houses we shall pass have been built from its massive ruins. It is singular, by the way, that it was twice captured by men of the name of Lilburn, or Lilburne; once in the reign of Edward II., once as I have related. On looking over historical records, we are surprised to find how often certain names have been fatal to certain spots; and this reminds me, by the way, that we boast the origin of the English sibyl, the venerable Mother Shipton. The wild rock, at whose foot she is said to have been born, is worthy of the tradition."

"You spoke just now," said Walter, who had not very patiently suffered the curate thus to ride his hobby, "of Eugene Aram; you knew him well?"

"Nay: he suffered not any to do that! He was a remarkable youth. I have noted him from his childhood upward, long before he came to Knaresbro', till on leaving this place, fourteen years back, I lost sight of him.—Strange, musing, solitary from a boy: but what accomplishment of learning he had reached! Never did I see one whom Nature so emphatically marked to be GREAT. I often wonder that his name has not long ere this been more universally noised abroad, whatever he attempted was stamped with such signal success. I have by me some scattered pieces of his poetry when a boy: they were given me by

his poor father, long since dead, and the fall of a dim, shadowy anticipation of future fame. Perhaps, yet, before he dies,—he is still young,—the presentment will be realised. You, too, know him, then?"

"Yes! I have known him. Stay—dare I ask you a question, a fearful question? Did suspicion ever, in your mind, in the mind of any one, rest on Aram, as concerned in the mysterious disappearance of my—of Clarke's? His acquaintance with Houseman who was suspected, Houseman's visit to Aram that night; his previous poverty—so extreme, if I hear rightly, his after riches—though they perhaps *may* be satisfactorily accounted for, his leaving this town so shortly after the disappearance I refer to,—these alone might not create suspicion in me, but I have seen the man in moments of misery and abstraction, I have listened to strange and broken words, I have noted a sudden, keen, and angry susceptibility to any unkind appeal to a less peaceful or less innocent remembrance. And there seems to me inexplicably to hang over his heart some gloomy recollection, which I cannot divest myself from imagining to be that of guilt."

Walter spoke quickly, and in great though half-suppressed excitement; the more kindled from observing that as he spoke, Summers changed countenance, and listened as with painful and uneasy attention.

"I will tell you," said the curate, after a short pause (lowering his voice)—"I will tell you; Aram did undergo examination—I was present at it, but from his character, and the respect universally felt for him, the examination was close and secret. He was not, mark me, suspected of the murder of the unfortunate Clarke, nor was any suspicion of murder generally entertained until all means of discovering Clarke were found wholly

unavailing; but of sharing with Houseman some part of the jewels with which Clarke was known to have left the town. This suspicion of robbery could not, however, be brought home, even to Houseman, and Aram was satisfactorily acquitted from the imputation. But in the minds of some present at that examination, a doubt lingered, and this doubt certainly deeply wounded a man so proud and susceptible. This, I believe, was the real reason of his quitting Knaresbro' almost immediately after that examination. And some persons, who felt for him, and were convinced of his innocence, persuaded the others to hush up the circumstance of his examination, nor has it generally transpired, even to this day, when the whole business is well nigh forgot. But as to his subsequent improvement in circumstances, there is no doubt of his aunt's having left him a legacy sufficient to account for it."

Walter bowed his head, and felt his suspicious waver, when the curate renewed—

"Yet it is but fair to tell you, who seem so deeply interested in the fate of Clarke, that since that period rumours have reached my ear that the woman at whose house Aram lodged, has from time to time dropped words that require explanation—hints that she could tell a tale—that she knows more than men will readily believe—nay, once she is even reported to have said that the life of Eugene Aram was in her power."

"Father of mercy! and did inquiry sleep on words so calling for its liveliest examination?"

"Not wholly. When the words were reported to me, I went to the house, but found the woman, whose habits and character are low and worthless, was abrupt and insolent in her manner; and after in vain endeavouring to call forth some explanation of the words she was said to have

uttered, I left the house fully persuaded that she had only given vent to a meaningless boast, and that the idle words of a disorderly gossip could not be taken as evidence against a man of the blameless character and austere habits of Aram. Since, however, you have now reawakened investigation, we will visit her before you leave the town; and it may be as well, too, that Houseman should undergo a further investigation before we suffer him to depart.

"I thank you! I thank you!—I will not let slip one thread of this dark clue!"

"And now," said the curate, pointing to a decent house, "we have reached the lodging Clarke occupied in the town!"

An old man of respectable appearance opened the door, and welcomed the curate and his companion with an air of cordial respect, which attested the well-deserved popularity of the former.

"We have come," said the curate, "to ask you some questions respecting Daniel Clarke, whom you remember as your lodger. This gentleman is a relation of his, and interested deeply in his fate!"

"What, sir!" quoth the old man; "and have you, his relation, never heard of Mr. Clarke since he left the town? Strange!—this room, this very room, was the one Mr. Clarke occupied, and next to this,—(here—opening a door) was his bedchamber!"

It was not without powerful emotion that Walter found himself thus within the apartment of his lost father. What a painful, what a gloomy, yet sacred interest, every thing around instantly assumed! The old-fashioned and heavy chairs—the brown wainscot walls—the little cupboard recessed as it were to the right of the fire-place, and piled with morsels of Indian china and long taper wine glasses—the small window-panes set deep in the wall,

giving a dim view of a bleak and melancholy looking garden in the rear—yes, the very floor he trod—the very table on which he leaned—the very hearth, dull and fireless as it was, opposite his gaze—all took a familiar meaning in his eye, and breathed a household voice into his ear. And when he entered the inner room, how, even to suffocation, were those strange, half-aid, yet not all bitter emotions increased. There was the bed on which his father had rested on the night before—what? perhaps his murder! The bed, probably a relic from the castle, when its antique furniture was set up to public sale, was hung with faded tapestry, and above its dark and polished summit were hearse-like and heavy trappings. Old commodes of rudely carved oak, a discoloured glass in a japan frame, a ponderous arm-chair of Elizabethan fashion, and covered with the same tapestry as the bed, altogether gave that uneasy and sepulchral impression to the mind so commonly produced by the relics of a mouldering and forgotten antiquity.

"It looks cheerless, sir," said the owner: "but then we have not had any regular lodger for years; it is just the same as when Mr. Clarke lived here. But bless you, sir, he made the dull rooms look gay enough. He was a blithesome gentleman. He and his friends, Mr. Houseman especially, used to make the walls ring again when they were over their cups!"

"It might have been better for Mr. Clarke," said the curate, "had he chosen his comrades with more discretion. Houseman was not a creditable, perhaps not a safe, companion."

"That was no business of mine then," quoth the lodging-letter; "but it might be now, since I have been a married man!"

The curate smiled. "Perhaps you, Mr. Moor, bore a part in those revels?"

"Why, indeed, Mr. Clarke would

rationally make me take a glass or two, sir."

"And you must then have heard the conversations that took place between Houseman and him? Did Mr. Clarke, ever, in those conversations, intimate an intention of leaving the town soon? And where, if so, did he talk of going?"

"Oh! first to London. I have often heard him talk of going to London, and then taking a trip to see some relations of his in a distant part of the country. I remember his caressing a little boy of my brother's: you know Jack, sir, not a little boy now, almost as tall as this gentleman. Ah," said he with a sort of sigh, "ah! I have a boy at home about this age,—when shall I see him again?"

"When indeed?" thought Walter, turning away his face at this anecdote, to him so naturally affecting.

"And the night that Clarke left you, were you aware of his absence?"

"No! he went to his room at his usual hour, which was late, and the next morning I found his bed had not been slept in, and that he was gone—gone with all his jewels, money, and valuables; heavy luggage he had none. He was a cunning gentleman; he never loved paying a bill. He was greatly in debt in different parts of the town, though he had not been here long. He ordered every thing and paid for nothing."

Walter groaned. It was his father's character exactly; partly it might be from dishonest principles superadded to the earlier feelings of his nature, but partly also from that temperamental at once careless and procrastinating, which, more often than vice,

loses men the advantage of reputation.

"Then in your own mind, and from your knowledge of him," renewed the curate, "you would suppose that Clarke's disappearance was intentional; that, though nothing has since been heard of him, none of the blacker rumours afloat were well founded?"

"I confess, sir, begging this gentleman's pardon, who you say is a relation, I confess I see no reason to think otherwise."

"Was Mr. Aram, Eugene Aram, ever a guest of Clarke's? Did you ever see them together?"

"Never at this house. I fancy Houseman once presented Mr. Aram to Clarke; and that they may have met and conversed some two or three times—not more, I believe; they were scarcely congenial spirits, sir."

Walter, having now recovered his self-possession, entered into the conversation; and endeavoured, by as minute an examination as his ingenuity could suggest, to obtain some additional light upon the mysterious subject so deeply at his heart. Nothing, however, of any effectual import was obtained from the good man of the house. He had evidently persuaded himself that Clarke's disappearance was easily accounted for, and would scarcely lend attention to any other suggestion than that of Clarke's dishonesty. Nor did his recollection of the meetings between Houseman and Clarke furnish him with any thing worthy of narration. With a spirit somewhat damped and disappointed, Walter, accompanied by the curate, recommenced his expedition.

CHAPTER XI.

CRY IN A RUSSIAN.—THE CHAMBER OF EARLY DEATH.—A HOMELY YET
MOMENTOUS CONFESSION.—THE EARTH'S SECRETS.—THE CAVERN.—THE
ACCUSATION.

"All is not well,
I doubt some foul play.

• • • • •

Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes."—*Hamlet*.

As they passed through the street, they perceived three or four persons standing round the open door of a house of ordinary description, the windows of which were partially closed.

"It is the house," said the curate, "in which Houseman's daughter died—poor—poor child! Yet why mourn for the young? Better that the light cloud should fade away into heaven with the morning breath, than travel through the weary day to gather in darkness and end in storm."

"Ah, sir!" said an old man, leaning on his stick, and lifting his hat in obeisance to the curate, "the father is within, and takes on bitterly. He drives them all away from the room, and sits moaning by the bedside, as if he was a-going out of his mind. Won't your reverence go in to him a bit?"

The curate looked at Walter inquiringly. "Perhaps," said the latter "you had better go in: I will wait without."

While the curate hesitated, they heard a voice in the passage, and presently Houseman was seen at the far end, driving some women before him with vehement gesticulations.

"I tell you, ye hell-hags!" shrieked his harsh and now straining voice, "that ye suffered her to die. Why did ye not send to London for phy-

sicians! Am I not rich enough to buy my child's life at any price? By the living —! I would have turned your very bodies into gold to have saved her. But she's DEAD! and I — out of my sight—out of my way!"

And with his hands clenched, his brows knit, and his head uncovered, Houseman sallied forth from the door, and Walter recognised the traveller of the preceding night. He stopped abruptly as he saw the little knot without, and scowled round at each of them with a malignant and ferocious aspect. "Very well—it's very well, neighbours!" said he at length with a fierce laugh: "this is kind! You have come to welcome Richard Houseman home, have ye?—Good, good! Not to gloat at his distress?—Lord! no. Ye have no idle curiosity—no prying, searching, gossiping devil within ye, that makes ye love to flock, and gape, and chatter, when poor men suffer! this is all pure compassion; and Houseman, the good, gentle, peaceful, honest Houseman, you feel for *him*,—I know you do! Hark ye: begone—away—march—tramp—or——Ha, ha! there they go—there they go!" laughing wildly again as the frightened neighbours shrunk from the spot, leaving only Walter and the clergyman with the childless man.

"Be comforted, Houseman!" said

Summers, soothingly. "It is a dreadful affliction that you have sustained. I know your daughter well: you may have heard her speak of me. Let us in, and try what heavenly comfort there is in prayer."

"Prayer! pooh! I am Richard Houseman!"

"Lives there one man for whom prayer is unavailing?"

"Out, center, out! My pretty Jane!—and she laid her head on my bosom,—and looked up in my face,—and so—died!"

"Come," said the curate, placing his hand on Houseman's arm. "come."

Before he could proceed, Houseman, who was muttering to himself, shook him off roughly, and hurried away up the street; but after he had gone a few paces, he turned back, and, approaching the curate, said, in a more collected tone,—"I pray you, sir, since you are a clergyman (I recollect your face, and I recollect Jane said you had been good to her)—I pray you go, and say a few words over her; but stay—don't bring in my name—you understand. I don't wish God to recollect that there lives such a man as he who now addresses you. Ha! ha! (shouting to the women), my hat, and stick too. Pal la la! pal la!—why should these things make us play the madman? It is a fine day, sir; we shall have a late winter. Curse the b——! how long she is. Yet the hat was left below. But when a death is in the house, sir, it throws things into confusion: don't you find it so?"

Here, one of the women, pale, trembling, and tearful, brought the rather his hat; and, placing it deliberately on his head, and bearing with a dreadful and convulsive attempt to smile, he walked slowly away, and disappeared.

"What strange mummers grief makes—" said the curate. "It is an appalling spectacle when it thus

wrings out feeling from a man of that mould! But, pardon me, my young friend; let me tarry here for a moment."

"I will enter the house with you," said Walter. And the two men walked in, and in a few moments they stood within the chamber of death.

The face of the deceased had not yet suffered the last withering change. Her young countenance was hushed and serene; and, but for the fixedness of the smile, you might have thought the lips moved. So delicate, fair, and gentle were the features, that it was scarcely possible to believe such a scion could spring from such a stock; and it seemed no longer wonderful that a thing so young, so innocent, so lovely, and so early blighted, should have touched that reckless and dark nature which rejected all other invasion of the softer emotions. The curate wiped his eyes, and kneeling down prayed, if not for the dead (who, as our Church teaches, are beyond human intercession)—perhaps for the father she had left on earth, more to be pitied of the two! Nor to Walter was the scene without something more impressive and thrilling than its mere pathos alone. He, now standing beside the corpse of Houseman's child, was son to the man of whose murder Houseman had been suspected. The children and the fatherless! might there be no retaliation here!

When the curate's prayer was over, and he and Walter escaped from the insistent blessings and complaints of the women of the house, they, with difficulty resisting the impression the scene had left upon their minds, once more resumed their errand.

"This is no time," said Walter, musically, "for an examination of Houseman; yet it must not be forgotten."

The curate did not reply for some

moments; and then, as an answer to the remark, observed that the conversation they anticipated with Aram's former hostess might throw some light on their researches. They now proceeded to another part of the town, and arrived at a lonely and desolate looking house, which seemed to wear in its very appearance something strange, sad and ominous. Some houses have an *expression*, as it were, in their outward aspect, that sinks unaccountably into the heart—a dim oppressive eloquence, which dispirits and afflicts. You say, some story must be attached to those walls; some legendary interest, of a darker nature, ought to be associated with the mute stone and mortar: you feel a mingled awe and curiosity creep over you as you gaze. Such was the description of the house that the young adventurer now surveyed. It was of antique architecture, not uncommon in old towns: gable-ends rose from the roof; dull, small, latticed panes were sunk deep in the grey, discoloured wall; the pale, in part, was broken and jagged; and rank weeds sprang up in the neglected garden, through which they walked towards the porch. The door was open; they entered, and found an old woman of coarse appearance sitting by the fireside, and gazing on space with that vacant stare which so often characterises the repose and relaxation of the uneducated poor. Walter felt an involuntary thrill of dislike come over him, as he looked at the solitary inmate of the solitary house.

"Hey day, sir!" said she in a grating voice; "and what now! Oh! Mr. Summers, is it you! You're welcome, sir. I wishes I could offer you a glass of summut, but the bottle's dry—he! he!" pointing with a revolting grin to an empty bottle that stood on a niche within the hearth. "I don't know how it is sir but I

never wants to eat; but ah! 'tis the liquor that does un' good!"

"You have lived a long time in this house?" said the curate.

"A long time—some thirty years an' more."

"You remember your lodger, Mr. Aram?"

"A—well—yes!"

"An excellent man——"

"Humph."

"A most admirable man!"

"A-humph! he!—humph! that's neither here nor there."

"Why, you don't seem to think as all the rest of the world does with regard to him?"

"I knows what I knows."

"Ah! by-the-by, you have some cock-and-a-bull story about him, I fancy, but you never could explain yourself; it is merely for the love of seeming wise that you invented it; eh, Goody?"

The old woman shook her head, and crossing her hands on her knee, replied with peculiar emphasis, but in a very low and whispered voice, "I could hang him!"

"Pooh!"

"Tell you I could!"

"Well, let's have the story then!"

"No, no! I have not told it to ne'er a one yet; and I won't for nothing. What will you give me?—Make it worth my while!"

"Tell us all, honestly, fairly, and fully, and you shall have five golden guineas. There, Goody."

Roused by this promise, the dame looked up with more of energy than she had yet shown, and muttered to herself, rocking her chair to and fro, "Aha! why not? no fear now—both gone—can't now murder the poor old creature, as the wretch once threatened. Five golden guineas—five, did you say, sir,—five!"

"Ay, and perhaps our lounty may not stop there," said the curate.

Still the old woman hesitated, and

still she muttered to herself; but, after some further prelude, and some further endorsement from the curate, the which we spare our reader, she came at length to the following narration —

"It was on the 7th of February, in the year '44; yea, '44, about six o'clock in the evening: for I was a washing in the kitchen, when Mr. Aram called to me, an' desired of me to make a fire upstairs, which I did: he then walked out. Some hours afterwards, it might be two in the morning, I was lying awake, for I was mighty bad with the toothache, when I heard a noise below, and two or three voices. On this, I was greatly afraid, and got out o' bed, and, opening the door, I saw Mr. Houseman and Mr. Clarke coming upstairs to Mr. Aram's room, and Mr. Aram followed them. They shut the door, and so, as there, it might be an hour. Well, I could not a-think what could make so shy an' reserved a gentleman as Mr. Aram admit these 'ere wild mad-ups like at that hour; an' I lay awake a-thinking an' a-thinking till I heard the door open agin, an' I went to listen at the keyhole, an' Mr. Clarke said: 'It will soon be morning and we must get off.' They then all three left the house; but I could not sleep, an' I got up afore five o'clock, and about that hour Mr. Aram an' Mr. Houseman returned, and they both glowered at me, as if they did not like to find me yestirring; an' Mr. Aram went into his room, and Houseman turned and frowned at me as black as night—'Lord have mercy on me! I see him now! An' I was really feared, an' I listened at the keyhole, an' I heard Houseman say: 'If the woman comes in, she'll tell.' 'What can she tell?' said Mr. Aram: 'poor simple thing, she knows nothing.' With that, Houseman said, says he: 'If she tells that I am here, it will be enough; but however,'—with a chuckling oath,—'we'll take an opportunity to shoot her.'

"On that I was so frightened that I went away back to my own room, and did not stir till they had a-gone out, and then——"

"What time was that?"

"About seven o'clock. Well, you put me out! where was I?—Well, I went into Mr. Aram's room, an' I seed they had been burning a fire, an' that all the ashes were taken out o' the grate; so I went an' looked at the rubbish behind the house, and there sure enough I seed the ashes, and among 'em several bits o' cloth and linen which seemed to belong to wearing apparel; and there, too, was a handkerchief which I had observed Houseman wear (for it was a very curious handkerchief, all spotted) many's the time, and there was blood on it, 'bout the size of a shilling. An' afterwards I seed Houseman, an' I showed him the handkerchief; and I said to him, 'What has come of Clarke?' an' he frowned, and, looking at me, said, 'Hark'ye, I know not what you mean: but, as sure as the devil keeps watch for souls, I will shoot you through the head if you ever let that d—d tongue of yours let slip a single word about Clarke, or me, or Mr. Aram; so look to yourself!'

"An' I was all scared, and trembled from limb to limb; an' for two whole years afterwards (long arter Aram and Houseman were both gone, I never could so much as open my lips on the matter, and afore he went, Mr. Aram would sometimes look at me, not sternly like as the villain Houseman, but as if he would read to the bottom of my heart. Oh! I was as if you had taken a mountain off o' me, when he an' Houseman left the town; for sure as the sun shines I believe, from what I have now said, that they two murdered Clarke on that same February night. An' now, Mr. Sumners, I feels more easy than I has felt for many a long day; an' if I have

not told it afore, it is because I thought of Houseman's frown, and his horrid words; but summit of it would ooze out of my tongue now an' then, for it's a hard thing, sir, to know a secret o' that sort and be quiet and still about it; and, indeed, I was not the same cretur when I knew it as I was afore, for it made me take to anything rather than thinking; and that's the reason, sir, I lost the good crakter I used to have."

Such, somewhat abridged from its "says he" and "says I"—its involutions and its tautologies, was the story which Walter held his breath to hear. But events thicken, and the maze is nearly thridden.

"Not a moment now should be lost," said the curate, as they left the house. "Let us at once proceed to a very able magistrate, to whom I can introduce you, and who lives a little way out of the town."

"As you will," said Walter, in an altered and hollow voice. "I am as a man standing on an eminence, who views the whole scene he is to travel over, stretched before him; but is dizzy and bewildered by the height which he has reached. I know—I feel—that I am on the brink of fearful and dread discoveries;—pray God that—— But heed me not, sir,—heed me not—let us on—on!"

It was now approaching towards the evening; and as they walked on, having left the town, the sun poured his last beams on a group of persons that appeared hastily collecting and gathering round a spot, well known in the neighbourhood of Knaresborough, called Thistle Hill.

"Let us avoid the crowd," said the curate. "Yet what, I wonder, can be its cause?" While he spoke, two peasants hurried by towards the throng.

"What is the meaning of the crowd yonder?" asked the curate.

"I don't know exactly, your

honour; but I hears as how Jem Nunnings, digging for stone for the huckkin, have dug out a big wooden chest."

A shout from the group broke in on the peasant's explanation—a sudden simultaneous shout, but not of joy, something of dismay and horror seemed to breathe in the sound.

Walter looked at the curate:—an impulse—a sudden instinct—seemed to attract them involuntarily to the spot whence that sound arose:—they quickened their pace—they made their way through the throng. A deep chest, that had been violently forced, stood before them; its contents had been dragged to day, and now lay on the sward—a bleached and mouldering skeleton! Several of the bones were loose, and detached from the body. A general hubbub of voices from the spectators,—inquiry—guess—fear—wonder—rang confusedly round.

"Yes!" said one old man, with grey hair, leaning on a pickaxe; "it is now about fourteen years since the Jew pedlar disappeared;—these are probably his bones—he was supposed to have been murdered!"

"Nay!" screeched a woman, drawing back a child who, all unalarmed, was about to touch the ghastly relics—"Nay, the pedlar was heard of afterwards! I'll tell ye, ye may be sure these are the bones of Clarke—Daniel Clarke—whom the country was so stirred about, when we were young!"

"Right, dame, right! It is Clarke's skeleton," was the simultaneous cry. And Walter, pressing forward, stood over the bones, and waved his hand as to guard them from farther insult. His sudden appearance—his tall stature—his wild gesture—the horror—the paleness—the grief of his countenance—struck and appalled all present. He remained speechless, and a sudden silence succeeded the late clamour.

"And what do you here, fools!" said a voice sharply. The spectators turned—a new comer had been added to the throng—it was Richard Houseman. His dress loose and disarranged—his flushed cheeks and rolling eyes—betrayed the source of consolation to which he had flown from his domestic affliction. "What do ye here?" said he, reeling forward. "Hah! human bones! and whose may they be, think ye?"

"They are Clarke's!" said the woman, who had first given rise to that supposition. "Yes, we think they are Daniel Clarke's—he who disappeared some years ago!" cried two or three voices in concert.

"Clarke's!" repeated Houseman, stooping down and picking up a thigh-bone, which lay at a little distance from the rest: "Clarke's!—ha! ha! they are no more Clarke's than mine!"

"Behold!" shouted Walter, in a voice that rang from cliff to plain,—and springing forward, he seized Houseman with a giant's grasp,—
"Behold the murderer!"

As if the avenging voice of Heaven had spoken, a thrilling, an electric conviction darted through the crowd. Each of the other spectators remembered at once the person of Houseman, and the suspicion that had attached to his name.

"Seize him! seize him!" burst forth from twenty voices. "Houseman is the murderer!"

"Murderer!" faltered Houseman, trembling in the iron hands of Walter—"murderer of whom? I tell ye these are not Clarke's bones!"

"Where then do *they* lie?" cried his arrestor.

Pale—confused—conscience stricken—the bewilderment of intoxication mingling with that of fear, Houseman turned a ghastly look around him, and shrinking from the eyes of all, reading in the eyes of all his con-

demnation, he gasped out, "Search St. Robert's Cave, in the turn at the entrance!"

"Away!" rang the deep voice of Walter, on the instant—"away!—to the Cave—to the Cave!"

On the banks of the river Nid, whose waters keep an everlasting murmur to the crags and trees that overhang them, is a wild and dreary cavern, hollowed from a rock, which, according to tradition, was formerly the hermitage of one of those early enthusiasts who made their solitude in the sternest recesses of earth, and from the austere thoughts, and the bitterest penance, wrought their joyless offerings to the great Spirit of the lovely world. To this desolate spot, called, from the name of its once-celebrated hermit, St. Robert's Cave, the crowd now swept, increasing its numbers as it advanced.

The old man who had discovered the unknown remains, which were gathered up and made a part of the procession, led the way; Houseman placed between two strong and active men, went next; and Walter followed behind, fixing his eyes intently upon the ruffian. The curate had had the precaution to send on before for torches, for the wintry evening now darkened round them, and the light from the torch-bearers, who met them at the cavern, cast forth its red and lurid flare at the mouth of the chasm. One of these torches Walter himself seized, and his was the first step that entered the gloomy passage. At this place and time, Houseman, who till then, throughout their short journey, had seemed to have recovered a sort of dogged self-possession, recoiled, and the big drops of fear or agony fell fast from his brow. He was dragged forward forcibly into the cavern; and now as the space filled, and the torches flickered against the grim walls, glaring on faces which caught, from the deep and thrilling contagion of

common sentiment, one common expression; it was not well possible for the wildest imagination to conceive a scene better fitted for the unhallowed aerial place of the murdered dead.

The eyes of all now turned upon Houseman, and he, after twice vainly endeavouring to speak, for the words died inarticulate and choked within him, advancing a few steps, pointed towards a spot on which, the next moment, fell the concentrated light of every torch. An indescribable and universal murmur, and then a breathless silence, ensued. On the spot which Houseman had indicated,—with the head placed to the right, lay what once had been a human body!

"Can you swear," said the priest, solemnly, as he turned to Houseman, "that these are the bones of Clarke?"

"Before God, I can swear it!" replied Houseman, at length finding voice.

"MY FATHER!" broke from Walter's lips, as he sank upon his knees; and that exclamation completed the awe and horror which prevailed in the

breasts of all present. Stung by the sense of the danger he had drawn upon himself, and despair and excitement restoring, in some measure, not only his natural hardihood but his natural astuteness; Houseman here mastered his emotions, and making that effort which he was afterwards enabled to follow up with an advantage to himself, of which he could not then have dreamed;—Houseman. I say, cried aloud,—

"But I did not do the deed: I am not the murderer."

"Speak out!—whom do you accuse?" said the curate.

Drawing his breath hard, and setting his teeth, as with some steeled determination, Houseman replied,—

"The murderer is Eugene Aram!"

"Aram!" shouted Walter, starting to his feet: "O God, thy hand hath directed me hither!" And suddenly and at once sense left him, and he fell, as if a shot had pierced through his heart, beside the remains of that father whom he had thus mysteriously discovered

BOOK V.

Οἱ αὐτῶ κακὰ τεύχει ἄνθρω ἐλλὰ κακὰ τεύχων,
Ἡ δὲ κακὴ βουλὴ τῶ βουλευσάντι κακίστη.

ἮΣΙΟΑ.

surely the man that plotteth ill against his neighbour perpetrates
ill against himself, and the evil design is most evil to him that deviseth it.

BOOK V

CHAPTER I.

CRASSDALE.—THE MORNING OF THE MARRIAGE.—THE CROWN' GOSHIP.—THE BRIDE AT HER TOILET.—THE ARRIVAL.

"Jam veniet virgo, jam dicetur Hymeneus,
Hymen, O Hymenee! Hymen ades, O Hymenee!"

CATULLUS: *Carmen Nuptiale*.

It was now the morning in which Eugene Aram was to be married to Madeline Lester. The student's house had been set in order for the arrival of the bride, and though it was yet early morn, two old women whom his domestic knew not the only one, for a bottom lass of eighteen had been transplanted from Lester's household, to meet the additional cares that the change of circumstances brought to Aram's, had invited to assist her in arranging what was already arranged, were bustling about the lower apartments, and making matters as they call it " tidy."

"Those flowers look but poor things after all," muttered an old crone, whom our readers will recognise as Dame Darkmans, placing a bowl of exotics on the table. "They does not look nigh so cheerful as them as grows in the open air."

"Tush! Goody Darkmans," said the second gossip. "They be much prettier and finer to my mind; and so

said Miss Nelly, when she plucked them last night and sent me down with them. They says there is not a blade o' grass that the master does not know. He must be a good man to love the things of the field so."

"Ho!" said Dame Darkmans, "ho! when Joe Wrench was hanged for shooting the lord's keeper, and he mounted the scaffold wid' a nosegay in his hand, he said, in a peevish voice, says he, 'Why does not they give me a tarnation? I always loved them sort o' flowers; I wore them when I went a courting Boss Lucas; an' I would like to die with one in my hand!' So a man may like flowers, and be but a hempen dog after all!"

"Now don't you, Goody; be still, can't you! what a tale for a marriage day!"

"Tally vally," returned the grim hag; "many a blessing carries a curse in its arms, as the new moon carries the old. This won't be one of your happy weddings, I tell ye."

"And why d'ye say that?"

"Did you ever see a man with a look like that make a happy husband! —No, no; can ye fancy the merry

* Now shall the Virgin arrive, now shall be sung the Hymeneus: Hymen Hymeneus! Be present, O Hymen Hymeneus!

laugh o' childer in this house, or a babe on the father's knee, or the happy, still smile on the mother's winsome face, some few year hence? No, Midge! the devil has set his black claw on the man's brow."

"Hush! hush, Goody Darkmans, he may hear o' ye," said the second gossip; who, having now done all that remained to do, had seated herself down by the window; while the more ominous crone, leaning over Aram's oak chair, uttered from thence her sibyl hoodings.

"No," replied Mother Darkmans, "I seed him go out an hour ago, when the sun was just on the rise; and I said, when I seed him stream into the wood yonder, and the ould leaves splashed in the damp under his feet; and his hat was aboon his brows, and his lips went so; I said, says I, 'tis not the man that will make a hearth bright, that would walk thus on his marriage day. But I knows what I knows; and I minds what I seed last night."

"Why, what did you see last night?" asked the listener, with a trembling voice: for Mother Darkmans was a great teller of ghost and witch tales, and a certain ineffable awe of her dark gipsy features and malignant words had circulated pretty largely throughout the village.

"Why, I sat up here with the ould deaf woman, and we were a drinking the health of the man and his wife that is to be, and it was nigh twelve o' the clock ere I minded it was time to go home. Well, so I puts on my cloak, and the moon was up, an' I goes along by the wood, and up by Fairleigh Field, an' I was singing the ballad on Joe Wrench's hanging, for the spirits had made me gamesome, when I sees somemut dark creep, creep, but iver so fast, arter me over the field, and making right ahead to the village. And I stands still, an' I was not a bit afeard; but sure I

thought it was no living cretur, at the first sight. And so it comes up faster and faster, and then I sees it was not one thing, but a many, many things, and they darkened the whole field afore me. And what d'ye think they was?—a whole body o' grey rats, thousands and thousands on 'em, and they were making away from the ould buildings here. For sure they knew—the witch things,—that an ill luck sat on the spot. And so I stood aside by the tree, an' I laughed to look on the uglyme creatures, as they swept close by me, tramp, tramp; an' they never hooded me a jot; but some on 'em looked aslant at me with their glittering eyes, and showed their white teeth, as if they grinned, and were saying to me, 'Ha, ha! Goody Darkmans, the house that we leave is a falling house; for the devil will have his own.'"

In some parts of the country, and especially in that where our scene is laid, no omen is more superstitiously believed evil than the departure of these loathsome animals from their accustomed habitation: the instinct which is supposed to make them desert an unsafe tenement, is supposed also to make them predict, in desertion, ill fortune to the possessor. But while the ears of the listening gossip were still tingling with this narration, the dark figure of the student passed the window, and the old women starting up, appeared in all the bustle of preparation, as Aram now entered the apartment.

"A happy day, your honour—a happy good morning," said both the crones in a breath; but the blessing of the worse-natured was vented in so harsh a croak, that Aram turned round as if struck by the sound; and still more disliking the well-remembered aspect of the person from whom it came, waved his hand impatiently, and bade them begone.

"A-whish — a-whish!" muttered

Dame Darkmans "to spake so to the poor; but the rats never lie, the honey thimble!"

Aram threw himself into his chair, and remained for some moments absorbed in a misery which did not bear the aspect of gloom. Then, walking once or twice to and fro the apartment, he stopped opposite the chimney-piece, over which were slung two bow-arms, which he never omitted to keep changed and primed.

"Humph!" he said, half aloud, "ye have been but little servants; and now ye are but little likely ever to requite the care I have bestowed upon you."

With that, a faint smile crossed his features, and turning away he ascended the stairs that led to the lofty chamber in which he had been so often wont to outwatch the stars,

"The souls of systems, and the lords of life,
Through their wide empires."

Before we follow him to his high and lonely retreat we will bring the reader to the manor-house, where all was already gladness and quiet but deep joy.

It wanted about three hours to that fixed for the marriage, and Aram was not expected at the manor-house till an hour before the celebration of the event. Nevertheless, the bells were already ringing loudly and lustily, and the near vicinity of the church to the house brought that sound, so inexpressibly brilliant and cheering, to the ears of the bride, with a noisy merriment that seemed like the hearty voice of an old-fashioned roarer who seeks in his grunting rather cordially than discretion. Before her glass stood the beautiful, the virgin, the glorious form of Madeline Lester, and Eleanor, with trembling hands and a voice between a laugh and a cry, was bawling up her sister's rich hair, and uttering her hopes, her wishes, her congratulations.

The small lattice was open, and the air came rather chillingly to the bride's bosom.

"It is a gloomy morning, dearest Nell," said she, shivering; "the winter seems about to begin at last."

"Stay, I will shut the window; the sun is struggling with the clouds at present, but I am sure it will clear up by and by. You don't—you don't leave us—the word must out—till evening."

"Don't cry!" said Madeline, half weeping herself; and sitting down she drew Eleanor to her; and the two sisters, who had never been parted since birth, exchanged tears that were natural, though scarcely the unmitigated tears of grief.

"And what pleasant evenings we shall have," said Madeline, holding her sister's hands, "in the Christmas time! You will be staying with us, you know; and that pretty old room in the north of the house Eugene has already ordered to be fitted up for you. Well, and my dear father, and dear Walter, who will be returned long ere then, will walk over to see us, and praise my housekeeping, and so forth. And then, after dinner, we will draw near the fire,—I next to Eugene, and my father, our guest, on the other side of me, with his long grey hair and his good fine face, with a tear of kind feeling in his eye; you know that look he has whenever he is affected! And at a little distance on the other side of the hearth will be you,—and Walter—I suppose we must make room for him. And Eugene, who will be then the liveliest of you all, shall read to us with his soft clear voice, or tell us all about the birds and flowers, and strange things in other countries. And then after supper we will walk half-way home across that beautiful valley—beautiful even in winter—with my father and Walter, and count the stars, and take new lessons in astronomy, and hear

tales about the astrologers and the alchemists, with their fine old dreams. Ah! it will be such a happy Christmas, Ellinor! And then, when spring comes, some fine morning—finer than this—when the birds are about, and the leaves getting green, and the flowers sprouting up every day, I shall be called in to help your toilet, as you have helped mine, and to go with you to church, though not, alas! as your bridesmaid. Ah! whom shall we have for that duty?"

"Pshaw!" said Ellinor, smiling through her tears.

While the sisters were thus engaged, and Madeline was trying, with her innocent kindness of heart, to exhilarate the spirits, so naturally depressed,

of her dotting sister, the sound of carriage wheels was heard in the distance—nearer, nearer;—now the sound stopped, as at the gate;—now fast, faster,—fast as the postillions could ply whip, and the horses tear along, while the groups in the churchyard ran forth to gaze, and the bells rang merrily all the while, two chaises whirled by Madeline's window, and stopped at the porch of the house: the sisters had flown in surprise to the casement.

"It is—it is—good God! it is Walter," cried Ellinor; "but how pale he looks!"

"And who are those strange men with him?" faltered Madeline, alarmed, though she knew not why.

CHAPTER II.

THE STUDENT ALONE IN HIS CHAMBER.—THE INTERRUPTION.—FAITHFUL LOVE.

"*Nequicquam thalamo graves
Hastæ—
Vitæbis, strepitumque, et celerem sequi
Ajacem.*"—HORAT. *Od. xv. lib. 1.*

ALONE in his favourite chamber, the instruments of science around him, and books, some of astronomical research, some of less lofty but yet abstruser lore, scattered on the tables, Eugene Aram indulged the last meditation he believed likely to absorb his thoughts before that great change of life which was to bless solitude with a companion.

"Yea," said he, pacing the apartment with folded arms,—“yea, all is safe! He will not again return; the dead sleeps now without a witness. I may lay this working brain upon the bosom that loves me, and not start at

night and think that the soft hand around my neck is the hangman's gripe. Back to thyself, henceforth and for ever, my busy heart! Let not thy secret stir from its gloomy depth! the seal is on the tomb; henceforth be the spectre laid. Yea, I must smooth my brow, and teach my lip restraint, and smile and talk like other men. I have taken to my hearth a watch, tender, faithful, anxious—but a watch. Farewell the unguarded hour!—the soul's relief in speech—the dark and broken, yet how grateful! confidence with self—farewell! And come thou veil! subtle, close, unvarying, the everlasting curse of entire hypocrisy, that under thee, as night, the vexed world within may sleep, and stir not!

* In vain within your nuptial chamber
Will you shun the deadly spears, the hostile
shout and Ajax eager in pursuit

and all, in truth concealment, may seem repose!"

As he uttered these thoughts, the student passed and looked on the extended landscape that lay below. A heavy chill, and comfortless mist sat saddening over the earth. Not a leaf stirred on the autumnal trees, but the mist-damps fell slowly and with a mournful murmur upon the unwearied grass. The outline of the morning sun was visible, but it gave forth no lustre; a ring of watery and dark vapour girded the melancholy orb. Far at the entrance of the valley the wild fern showed red and faded, and the first march of the deadly winter was already heralded by that drear and silent desolation which cradles the winds and storms. But amidst this cheerless scene, the distant note of the merry marriage-bell floated by, like the good spirit of the wilderness, and the student rather paused to hearken to the note than to survey the scene.

"My marriage-bell!" said he; "could I two short years back have dreamed of this? My marriage-bell! How fondly my poor mother, when first she learned pride for her young scholar, would predict this day, and blend its festivities with the honour and the wealth her son was to acquire! Alas! can we have no sciences to count the stars and forebode the black eclipses of the future! But peace! peace! peace! I am, I will, I shall be, happy now! Memory, I defy thee!"

He uttered the last words in a deep and intense tone, and turning away as the joyful peal again broke distinctly on his ear—

"My marriage-bell! Oh, Madeline! how wonderfully beloved; how unexpectably dear thou art to me! What hast thou compared? how many reasons for resolve! how vast an army in the Past has thy bright and tender purity overthrown! But thou,—no never shalt thou repent!" And for

several minutes the sole thought of the soliloquist was love. But scarce consciously to himself, a spirit not, to all seeming, befitting to that bridal-day,—vague, restless, impressed with the dark and fluttering shadow of coming change, had taken possession of his breast, and did not long yield the mastery to any brighter and more serene emotion.

"And why?" he said, as this spirit regained its empire over him, and he paused before the "starred tubes" of his beloved science—"and why this chill, this shiver, in the midst of hope? Can the mere breath of the seasons, the weight or lightness of the atmosphere, the outward gloom or smile of the brute mass called Nature, affect us thus? Out on this empty science, this vain knowledge, this little lore, if we are so fooled by the vile clay and the common air from our one great empire—self! Great God! hast thou made us in mercy or in disdain! Placed in this narrow world,—darkness and cloud around us,—no fixed rule for men,—creeds, morals, changing in every clime, and growing like herbs upon the mere soil,—we struggle to dispel the shadows; we grope around; from our own heart and our sharp and hard endurance we strike our only light,—for what? to show us what depths we are! creatures of accident, tools of circumstance, blind instruments of the scornful Fate,—the very mind, the very reason, a bound slave to the desires, the weakness of the clay,—affected by a cloud, dulled by the damps of the foul marsh,—stricken from power to weakness, from sense to madness, to gaping idiosyncrasy, or delirious raving, by a putrid exhalation!—a rheum, a chill, and Caesar trembles! The world's gods, that slay or enlighten millions—poor puppets to the same rank, reep which coils up the fungus or breeds the worm,—pah! How little worth is it in this life to be wise!" Stream strange

how my heart sinks. Well, the better sign, the better sign! *in danger* it never sank."

Absorbed in these reflections, Aram had not for some minutes noticed the sud-en ceasing of the bell; but now, as he again paused from his irregular and abrupt pinnings along the chamber, the silence struck him, and looking forth, and striving again to catch the note, he saw a little group of men, among whom he marked the erect and comely form of Rowland Lester, approaching towards the house.

"What!" he thought, "do they come for me! Is it so late! Have I played the lag-ard? Nay, it yet wants near an hour to the time they expected me. Well, some kindness,—some attention from my good father-in-law; I must thank him for it. What! my hand trembles: how weak are these poor nerves; I must rest and recall my mind to itself!"

And, indeed, whether or not from the novelty and importance of the event he was about to celebrate, or from some presentiment, occasioned, as he would fain believe, by the mournful and sudden change in the atmosphere, an embarrassment, a wavering, a fear, very unwonted to the calm and stately self-possession of Eugene Aram, made itself painfully felt throughout his frame. He sank down in his chair and strove to recollect himself; it was an effort in which he had just succeeded, when a loud knocking was heard at the outer door—it swung open—several voices were heard. Aram sprang up, pale, breathless, his lips apart.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, clasping his hands. "Murderer!—was that the word I heard shouted forth!—The voice, too, is Walter Lester's. Has he returned!—can he have learned——!"

To rush to the door,—to throw across it a long, heavy, iron bar, which would resist assaults of no common strength, was his first impulse. Thus

enabled to gain time for reflection, his active and alarmed mind ran over the whole field of expedient and conjecture. Again, "Murderer!" "Stay me not," cried Walter from below; "*my* hand shall seize the murderer!"

Guess was now over; danger and death were marching on him. Escape,—how?—whither? the height forbade the thought of flight from the casement!—the door!—he heard loud steps already hurrying up the stairs;—his hands clutched convulsively at his breast, where his firearms were generally concealed,—they were left below. He glanced one lightning glance round the room; no weapon of any kind was at hand. His brain reeled for a moment, his breath gasped, a mortal sickness passed over his heart, and then the mind triumphed over all. He drew up to his full height, folded his arms doggedly on his breast, and muttering,—

"The accuser comes,—I have it still to refute the charge!"—he stood prepared to meet, nor despairing to evade, the worst.

As waters close over the object which divided them, all these thoughts, these fears, and this resolution, had been but the work, the agitation, and the succeeding calm, of the moment; that moment was past.

"Admit us!" cried the voice of Walter Lester, knocking fiercely at the door.

"Not so fervently, boy," said Lester, laying his hand on his nephew's shoulder; "your tale is yet to be proved—I believe it not: treat him as innocent, I pray—I command, till you have shown him guilty."

"Away, uncle!" said the fiery Walter; "he is my father's murderer. God hath given justice to my hands." These words, uttered in a lower key than before, were but indistinctly heard by Aram through the massy door.

"Open, or we force our entrance!" shouted Walter again; and Aram

speaking for the first time, replied in a clear and sonorous voice, so that an angel, had one spoken, could not have more deeply impressed the heart of Rowland Lester with a conviction of the student's innocence,—

"Who knocks so rudely!—what means this violence? I open my doors to my friends. Is it a friend who asks it?"

"I ask it," said Rowland Lester, in a trembling and agitated voice. "There seems some dreadful mistake: come forth, Eugene, and rectify it by a word."

"Is it you, Rowland Lester!—it is enough. I was but with my books, and had secured myself from intrusion. Enter."

The bar was withdrawn, the door was burst open, and even Walter Lester—even the officers of justice with him—drew back for a moment, as they beheld the lofty brow, the majestic presence, the features so unutterably calm, of Eugene Aram.

"What want you, sirs?" said he, unmoved and unflinching, though in the officers of justice he recognised faces he had known before, and in that distant town in which all that he treasured in the past lay treasured up. At the sound of his voice, the spell that for an instant had arrested the step of the avenging son melted away.

"Seize him!" he cried to the officers; "you see your prisoner."

"Hold!" cried Aram drawing back; "by what authority is this outrage!—for what am I arrested?"

"Behold," said Walter, speaking through his teeth—"behold our warrant! You are accused of murder! Know you the name of Richard Houseman? Pause—consider;—or that of Daniel Clarke?"

Slowly Aram lifted his eyes from the warrant, and it might be seen that his face was a shade more pale, though his look did not quail, or his nerves tremble. Slowly he turned his gaze

upon Walter, and then, after one moment's survey, dropped it once more on the paper.

"The name of Houseman is not unfamiliar to me," said he calmly, but with effort.

"And knew you Daniel Clarke?"

"What mean these questions?" said Aram, losing temper, and stamping violently on the ground: "is it thus that a man, free and guiltless, is to be questioned at the behest, or rather outrage, of every lawless boy? Lead me to some authority meet for me to answer;—for you, boy, my answer is contempt."

"Big words shall not save thee, murderer!" cried Walter, breaking from his uncle, who in vain endeavoured to hold him; and laying his powerful grasp upon Aram's shoulder. Livid was the glare that shot from the student's eye upon his assailant; and so fearfully did his features work and change with the passions within him, that even Walter felt a strange shudder thrill through his frame.

"Gentlemen," said Aram, at last, mastering his emotions, and resuming some portion of the remarkable dignity that characterised his usual bearing, as he turned towards the officers of justice,—*"I call upon you to discharge your duty; if this be a rightful warrant, I am your prisoner, but I am not this man's. I command your protection from him!"*

Walter had already released his gripe, and said, in a muttered voice,—

"My passion misled me, violence is unworthy my solemn cause. God and Justice—not these hands—are my avengers."

"Your avengers!" said Aram; "what dark words are these! This warrant accuses me of the murder of one Daniel Clarke: what is he to thee?"

"Mark me, man!" said Walter, fixing his eyes on Aram's countenance.

"The name of Daniel Clarke was a feigned name; the real name was Geoffrey Lester: that murdered Lester was my father, and the brother of him whose daughter had I not come to-day, you would have called your wife!"

Aram felt, while these words were uttered, that the eyes of all in the room were on him; and perhaps that knowledge enabled him not to reveal by outward sign what must have passed within during the awful trial of that moment.

"It is a dreadful tale," he said, "if true: dreadful to me, so nearly allied to that family. But as yet I grapple with shadows."

"What! does not your conscience now convict you?" cried Walter, staggered by the calmness of the prisoner. But here Lester, who could no longer contain himself, interposed: he put by his nephew, and rushing to Aram, fell, weeping, upon his neck.

"I do not accuse thee, Eugene—my son—my son—I feel—I know thou art innocent of this monstrous crime: some horrid delusion darkens that poor boy's sight. You—you—who would walk aside to save a worm!" and the poor old man, overcome with his emotions, could literally say no more.

Aram looked down on Lester with a compassionate expression, and soothing him with kind words, and promises that all would be explained, gently moved from his hold, and, anxious to terminate the scene, silently motioned the officers to proceed. Struck with the calmness and dignity of his manner, and fully impressed by it with the notion of his innocence, the officers treated him with a marked respect; they did not even walk by his side, but suffered him to follow their steps. As they descended the stairs, Aram turned round to Walter, with a bitter and reproachful countenance.—

"And so, young man, your malice against me has reached even to this! Will nothing but my life content you?"

"Is the desire of execution on my father's murderer but the wish of malice?" retorted Walter; though his heart yet well-nigh misgave him as to the grounds on which his suspicion rested.

Aram smiled, as half in scorn, half through incredulity, and, shaking his head gently, moved on without farther words.

The three old women, who had remained in listening astonishment at the foot of the stairs, gave way as the men descended; but the one who so long had been Aram's solitary domestic, and who, from her deafness, was still benighted and uncomprehending as to the causes of his seizure, though from that very reason her alarm was the greater and more acute,—she—impatiently thrusting away the officers, and mumbling some unintelligible anathema as she did so—flung herself at the feet of a master, whose quiet habits and constant kindness had endeared him to her humble and faithful heart, and exclaimed,—

"What are they doing? Have they the heart to ill-use you? O master, God bless you! God shield you! I shall never see you, who was my only friend—who was every one's friend—any more!"

Aram drew himself from her, and said with a quivering lip to Rowland Lester,—

"If her fears are true—if—if I never more return hither, see that her old age does not starve—does not want."

Lester could not speak for sobbing, but the request was remembered. And now Aram, turning aside his proud head to conceal his emotion, beheld open the door of the room so trimly prepared for Madeline's reception: the flowers smiled upon him

from their minds. "Lead on, gentlemen, no need quickly. And so Eugene Aram passed his threshold!"

"He, he!" muttered the old hag, whose predictions in the morning had been so ominous. "He, he! you'll believe Goady Darkmans, another time! Pray have respect to the sayings of the old. 'Twas not far reaching the rats grinned at me last night, but he's in and have a warm glass. He, he! there will be all the strong impacts for us now, the Lord is merciful to the poor!"

As the little group proceeded through the valley, the officers first, Aram and Lester side by side, Walter was his hand on his pistol and his eye on the prisoner, a little behind—Lester endeavoured to cheer the prisoner's spirits and his own, by insisting on the madness of the charge, and the certainty of instant acquittal from the magistrate to whom they were bound, and who was esteemed the one most most acute and most just in the country. Aram interrupted him somewhat abruptly,—

"My friend, enough of this presently. But Madeline—what knows she as yet?"

"Nothing, of course, we kept —"

"Exactly—exactly, you have done wisely. Why need she learn any thing as yet? Say an arrest for debt—a mistake—an absence but of a day or so at most—you understand?"

"Yes. Will you not see her, Eugene, before you go, and say this yourself?"

"I?—O God—I? to whom this day was—No, no, save me, I implore you, from the agony of such a contrast—an interview so mournful and unavailing. No, we must not meet! But whether go we not? Not—not, surely, through all the idle gossip of the village—the crowd already excited to gaze, and stare, and speculate on the —"

"No," interrupted Lester, "the carriages await us at the farther end

of the valley. I thought of that—for the rash boy behind seems to have changed his nature. I loved—Heaven knows how I loved my brother—but before I would let suspicion thus blind reason, I would suffer inquiry to sleep for ever on his fate."

"Your nephew," said Aram, "has ever wronged me. But waste not words on him: let us think only of Madeline. Will you go back at once to her, tell her a tale to lull her apprehensions, and then follow us with haste! I am alone among enemies till you come."

Lester was about to answer, when, at a turn in the road which brought the carriage within view, they perceived two figures in white hastening towards them; and ere Aram was prepared for the surprise, Madeline had sunk, pale, trembling, and all breathless, on his breast.

"I could not keep her back," said Ellmer, apologetically, to her father.

"Back! and why? Am I not in my proper place?" cried Madeline, lifting her face from Aram's breast, and then, as her eyes circled the group, and rested on Aram's countenance, now no longer calm, but full of woe—of passion—of disappointed love—of anticipated despair—she rose, and gradually recoiling with a fear which struck dumb her voice, thrice attempted to speak, and thrice failed.

"But what—what is—what means this!" exclaimed Ellmer. "Why do you weep, father? Why does Eugene turn away his face? You answer not. Speak, for God's sake! These strangers—what are they? And you, Walter, you—why are you so pale? Why do you thus knit your brows and fold your arms? You—you will tell me the meaning of this dreadful silence—this scene! Speak, cousin—dear cousin, speak!"

"Speak!" cried Madeline, finding voice at length, but in the sharp and straining tone of wild terror, in which

they recognised no note of the natural music. That single word sounded rather as a shriek than an adjuration; and so piercingly it ran through the hearts of all present, that the very officers, hardened as their trade had made them, felt as if they would rather have faced death than answered that command.

A dead, long, dreary pause, and Aram broke it. "Madeline Lester," said he, "prove yourself worthy of the hour of trial. Exert yourself; arouse your heart; be prepared! You are the betrothed of one whose soul never quailed before man's angry word. Remember that, and fear not!"

"I will not—I will not, Eugene! Speak—only speak!"

"You have loved me in good report; trust me now in ill. They accuse me of crime—a heinous crime! At first, I would not have told you the real charge; pardon me, I wronged you: now, know all! They accuse me, I say, of crime. Of what crime? you ask. Ay, I scarce know, so vague is the charge—so fierce the accuser: but, prepare, Madeline—it is of murder!"

Raised as her spirits had been by the haughty and earnest tone of Aram's exhortation, Madeline now, though she turned deadly pale—though the earth swam round and round—yet repressed the shriek upon her lips, as those horrid words shot into her soul.

"You!—murder!—you! And who dares accuse you?"

"Behold him—your cousin!"

Ellinor heard, turned, fixed her eyes on Walter's sullen brow and motionless attitude, and fell senseless to the earth. Not thus Madeline. As there is an exhaustion that forbids, not invites repose, so, when the mind is thoroughly on the rack, the common relief to anguish is not allowed; the senses are too sharply strong, thus happily to collapse into forgetfulness:

the dreadful inspiration that agony kindles, supports nature while it consumes it. Madeline passed, without a downward glance, by the lifeless body of her sister; and walking with a steady step to Walter, she laid her hand upon his arm, and fixing on his countenance that soft clear eye, which was now lit with a searching and preternatural glare, and seemed to pierce into his soul, she said,—

"Walter! do I hear aright? Am I awake? Is it you who accuse Eugene Aram?—your Madeline's betrothed husband,—Madeline, whom you once loved!—Of what!—of crimes which death alone can punish. Away!—it is not you—I know it is not. Say that I am mistaken—that I am mad, if you will. Come, Walter, relieve me: let me not abhor the very air you breathe!"

"Will no one have mercy on me?" cried Walter, rent to the heart, and covering his face with his hands. In the fire and heat of vengeance, he had not reckoned of this. He had only thought of justice to a father—punishment to a villain—rescue for a credulous girl. The woe—the horror he was about to inflict on all he most loved; *this* had not struck upon him with a due force till now!

"Mercy—you talk of mercy! I knew it could not be true!" said Madeline, trying to pluck her cousin's hand from his face: "you could not have dreamed of wrong to Eugene—and—and upon this day. Say we have erred, or that you have erred, and we will forgive and bless you even now!"

Aram had not interfered in this scene. He kept his eyes fixed on the cousins, not uninterested to see what effect Madeline's touching words might produce on his accuser: meanwhile, she continued,—"Speak to me, Walter—dear Walter, speak to me! Are you, my cousin, my play-fellow—are you the one to blight our

hopes—to catch our joys—to bring
 cold and horror into a home so lately
 all peace and sunshine—your own
 home—your dear dead's home? What
 have you done? what have you dared
 to do? Accuse him!—of what? Mur-
 der! speak, speak.—Murder, ha! ha!
 —murder! nay, not so!—you would
 not venture to come here—you would
 not let me take your hand—you would
 not look us, your uncle, your more
 than sisters, in the face, if you could
 name in your heart this lie—this
 black, horrid lie!”

Walter withdrew his hands—and,
 as he turned his face, said,—

“Let him prove his innocence—
 pray God he do!—I am not his
 accuser, Madeline. His accusers are
 the bones of my dead father!—Save
 those, Heaven alone, and the revealing
 earth, are witness against him!”

“Your father!” said Madeline,
 staggering back—“my lost uncle!
 Nay, now I know, indeed, what a
 shadow has appalled us all! Did you
 know my uncle, Eugene?—Did you
 ever see Geoffrey Lester?”

“Never, as I believe, so help me
 God!” said Aram, laying his hand
 on his heart. “But this is idle now,”
 as recollecting himself, he felt that
 the case had gone forth from Walter’s
 hands, and that appeal to him had
 become vain.

“Leave us now, dearest Madeline,
 my beloved wife that shall be, that
 is—I go to disprove these charges—
 perhaps I shall return to-night. Delay
 not my acquittal, even from doubt—
 say a doubt. Come, sir.”

“O Eugene! Eugene!” cried Ma-
 deline, throwing herself on her knees
 before him—“do not order me to
 leave you now—now, in the hour of
 dread. I will not. Nay, look not so!
 I swear I will not. Father, dear
 father, come, and plead for me—say I
 shall go with you. I ask nothing
 more. Do not fear for my nerves—
 cowardice is gone. I will not shame

you.—I will not play the woman. I
 know what is due to one who loves
 him—try me, only try me. You
 weep, father, you shake your head.
 But you, Eugene—you have not the
 heart to deny me! Think—think if
 I stayed here to count the moments
 till you return, my very senses would
 leave me. What do I ask!—but to
 go with you, to be the first to hail
 your triumph! Had this happened
 two hours hence, you could not have
 said me nay—I should have claimed
 the right to be with you; I now but
 implore the blessing.—You relent—
 you relent—I see it!”

“O Heaven!” exclaimed Aram,
 rising, and clasping her to his breast,
 and wildly kissing her face, but with
 cold and trembling lips,—“this is, in-
 deed, a bitter hour; let me not sink
 beneath it. Yes, Madeline, ask your
 father if he consents. I had your
 strengthening presence as that of an
 angel. I will not be the one to sever
 you from my side.”

“You are right, Eugene,” said
 Lester, who was supporting Ellnor,
 not yet recovered,—“let her go with
 us; it is but common kindness, and
 common mercy.”

Madeline uttered a cry of joy (joy
 even at such a moment!), and clung
 fast to Eugene’s arm, as if for assur-
 ance that they were not indeed to be
 separated.

By this time some of Lester’s ser-
 vants, who had from a distance fol-
 lowed their young mistresses, reached
 the spot. To their care Lester gave
 the still scarce reviving Ellnor; and
 then, turning round with a severe
 countenance to Walter, said, “Come,
 sir, your rashness has done sufficient
 wrong for the present, come now
 and see how soon your suspicions will
 end in shame.”

“Justice, and blood for blood!”
 said Walter, sternly; but his heart
 felt as if it were broken. His vener-
 able uncle’s tears—Madeline’s look

of horror, as she turned from him—Elliner, all lifeless, and he not daring to approach her—this was *his* work! He pulled his hat over his eyes, and hastened into the carriage alone.

Lester, Madeline, and Aram, followed in the other vehicle; and the two officers contented themselves with mounting the box, certain that the prisoner would attempt no escape.

CHAPTER III.

THE JUSTICE.—THE DEPARTURE.—THE EQUANIMITY OF THE CORONAL IN BEARING THE MISFORTUNES OF OTHER PEOPLE.—THE EXAMINATION; ITS RESULT.—ARAM'S CONDUCT IN PRISON.—THE ELASTICITY OF OUR HUMAN NATURE.—A VISIT FROM THE EARL.—WALTER'S DETERMINATION.—MADLINE.

"Bear me to prison, where I am committed."—*Measure for Measure.*

ON arriving at Sir ——'s, a disappointment, for which, had they previously conversed with the officers, they might have been prepared, awaited them. The fact was that the justice had only endorsed the warrant sent from Yorkshire; and after a very short colloquy, in which he expressed his regret at the circumstance, his conviction that the charge would be disproved, and a few other courteous commonplaces, he gave Aram to understand that the matter now did not rest with him, but that it was to Yorkshire that the officers were bound, and before Mr. Thornton, a magistrate of that county, that the examination was to take place. "All I can do," said the magistrate, "I have already done; but I wished for an opportunity of informing you of it. I have written to my brother justice at full length respecting your high character, and treating the habits and rectitude of your life alone as a sufficient refutation of so monstrous a charge."

For the first time a visible embarrassment came over the firm nerves of the prisoner: he seemed to look with great uneasiness at the prospect of this long and dreary journey, and for such an end. Perhaps, the very notion of returning as a suspected

criminal to that part of the country where a portion of his youth had been passed, was sufficient to disquiet and deject him. All this while his poor Madeline seemed actuated by a spirit beyond herself; she would not be separated from his side—she held his hand in hers—she whispered comfort and courage at the very moment when her own heart most sank. The magistrate wiped his eyes when he saw a creature so young, so beautiful, in circumstances so fearful, and bearing up with an energy so little to be expected from her years and delicate appearance. Aram said but little; he covered his face with his right hand for a few moments, as if to hide a passing emotion, a sudden weakness. When he removed it, all vestige of colour had died away; his face was pale as that of one who had risen from the grave; but it was settled and composed.

"It is a hard pang, sir," said he, with a faint smile; "so many miles—so many days—so long a deferment of knowing the best, or preparing to meet the worst. But, be it so! I thank you, sir,—I thank you all—Lester, Madeline, for your kindness; you two must now leave me, the brand is on my name—the suspected man is

no fit object for love or friendship ! Farewell ! ”

“ We go with you ! ” said Madeline firmly and in a very low voice.

Aram’s eye sparkled, but he waved his hand impatiently.

“ We go with you, my friend ! ” repeated Lester.

And so, indeed, not to dwell long on a painful scene, it was finally settled. Lester and his two daughters that evening followed Aram to the dark and fatal bourne to which he was bound.

It was in vain that Walter, seizing his uncle’s hands, whispered,—

“ For Heaven’s sake, do not be rash in your friendship ! You have not yet learned all. I tell you, that there can be no doubt of his guilt ! Remember, it is a brother for whom you mourn ! will you countenance his murderer ? ”

Lester, despite himself, was struck by the earnestness with which his nephew spoke, but the impression fled away as the words ceased ; so strong and deep had been the fascination which Eugene Aram had exercised over the hearts of all once drawn within the near circle of his attraction, that had the charge of murder been made against himself. Lester could not have repelled it with a more out-rejection of the transience of the accused. Still, however, the deep sincerity of his nephew’s manner in some measure served to soften his resentment towards him.

“ No, no, boy ! ” said he, drawing away his hand. “ Howland Lester is not the one to desert a friend in the day of darkness and the hour of need. Be silent, I say !—My brother, my poor brother, you tell me, has been murdered. I will see justice done to him ; but, Aram ! Fie ! fie ! it is a name that would whisper falsehood to the heaviest accusation. Go, Walter ! ” I do not blame you ;—you may be right—a murdered father is a dread

and awful memory to a son ! What wonder that the thought warps your judgment ! But go ! Eugene was to me both a guide and a blessing, a father in wisdom, a son in love. I cannot look on his accuser’s face without anguish. Go ! we shall meet again.—How ! Go ! ”

“ Enough, sir ! ” said Walter, partly in anger, partly in sorrow ;—“ Time be the judge between us all ! ”

With those words he turned from the house, and proceeded on foot towards a cottage half way between Grassdale and the magistrate’s house, at which, previous to his return to the former place, he had prudently left the corporal—not willing to trust to that person’s discretion, as to the tales and scandal that he might propagate throughout the village, on a matter so painful and so dark.

Let the world wag as it will, there are some tempers which its vicissitudes never reach. Nothing makes a picture of distress more sad than the portrait of some individual sitting indifferently looking on in the back ground. This was a secret Hogarth knew well. Mark his deathbed scenes ;—Poverty and Vice worked up into horror ;—the physicians in the corner wrangling for the fee ;—or the child playing with the coffin ;—or the nurse fishing what fortune, harsh, yet less harsh than humanity, might have left. In the melancholy depth of humour that stoops both our fancy and our heart in the immortal romance of Cervantes, (for, how profoundly melancholy is it to be compelled by one gallant lady to laugh at all that is gentle, and brave, and wise, and generous,) nothing grates on us more than when—her none of all—the poor knight lies dead,—his exploits for ever over—for ever dumb his eloquent discourses—that when, I say, we are told that, despite of his grief, even little Sancho did not eat or drink the less—these touches open to us the real world.

it is true, but it is not the best part of it. Certain it was, that when Walter, full of condescending emotions at all he had witnessed, — harassed, tortured, yet also elevated, by his feelings — stopped opposite the cottage door, and saw there the corporal sitting comfortably in the porch, — his vile *medicium Subini* before him — his pipe in his mouth — and a complacent expression of satisfaction diffusing itself over features which shrewdness and selfishness had marked for their own; — certain it was, that, at this sight, Walter experienced a more displeasing revulsion of feeling — a more entire conviction of sadness — a more consummate disgust of this weary world and the motley masquers that walk therein, than all the tragic scenes he had just witnessed had produced within him.

"And well, sir," said the corporal, slowly rising, "how did it go off? — wasn't the villain bash'd to the dust? — You've nabbed him safe, I hope?"

"Silence!" said Walter, sternly; "prepare for our departure. The chaise will be here forthwith; we return to Yorkshire this day. Ask me no more now."

"A — well — baugh!" said the corporal.

There was a long silence. Walter walked to and fro the road before the cottage. The chaise arrived; the luggage was put in. Walter's foot was on the step: but before the corporal mounted the rumbling dickey, that invaluable domestic hemmed thrice.

"And had you time, sir, to think of poor Jacob, and slip in a word to your uncle about the bit tato ground?"

We pass over the space of time, short in fact, long in suffering, that elapsed, till the prisoner and his companions reached Knaresbro'. Aram's conduct during this time was not only calm but cheerful. The stoical doc-

trines he had affected through life, he on this trying interval called into remarkable exertion. He it was who now supported the spirits of his mistress and his friend; and though he no longer pretended to be sanguine of acquittal — though again and again he urged upon them the gloomy fact — first, how improbable it was that this course had been entered into against him without strong presumption of guilt; and secondly, how little less improbable it was, that at that distance of time he should be able to procure evidence, or remember circumstances, sufficient on the instant to set aside such presumption, — he yet dwelt partly on the hope of ultimate proof of his innocence, and still more strongly on the firmness of his own mind to bear, without shrinking, even the hardest fate.

"Do not," he said to Lester, "do not look on these trials of life only with the eyes of the world. Reflect how poor and minute a segment, in the vast circle of eternity, existence is at the best. Its sorrow and its shame are but momenta. Always in my brightest and youngest hours I have wrapped my heart in the contemplation of an august futurity: —

'The soul, secure in its existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.'

Were it not for Madeline's dear sake, I should long since have been over-weary of the world. As it is, the sooner, even by a violent and unjust fate, we leave a path begirt with snares below and tempests above, the happier for that soul which looks to its lot in this earth as the least part of its appointed doom."

In discourses like this, which the nature of his eloquence was peculiarly calculated to render solemn and impressive, Aram strove to prepare his friends for the worst, and perhaps to cheat, or to steel, himself. Ever as he spoke thus, Lester or Ellinor broke

on him with impatient remonstrance; but Madeline, as if imbued with a deeper and more thoughtful penetration into the future, listened in tearless and breathless attention. She gazed upon him with a look that shared the thought he expressed, though it ran not yet she dreamed saw the heart from which it came. In the words of that beautiful poet, to whose true nature so full of unuttered tenderness—so fraught with the rich nobility of love—we have begun slowly to awaken—

"Her lip was silent, scarcely beat her heart,
Her eye alone proclaim'd 'we will not part!'"

The "Aops" may perish, or thy friends may flee,

Farewell to life—but not adieu to thee!"*

They arrived at noon at the house of Mr. Thornton, and Aram underwent his examination. Though he denied most of the particulars in Housman's evidence, and expressly disavowed the charge of murder, his commitment was made out, and that day he was removed by the officers (Barker and Moor, who had arrested him at Grassdale,) to York Castle, to await his trial at the *assizes*.

The sensation which this extraordinary event created throughout the country was widely unequalled. Not only in Yorkshire, and the county in which he had of late resided, where his personal habits were known, but even in the metropolis, and amongst men of all classes in England, it appears to have caused a mingled feeling of astonishment, horror, and incredulity, which in our times had has no parallel in any criminal prosecution. The peculiar attributes of the prisoner—his person—his manner—his moral life—the interest that by students had been for years attached to his name—his approaching marriage—the length of time that

had elapsed since the crime had been committed—the singular and abrupt manner, the wild and legendary spot, in which the skeleton of the lost man had been discovered—the imperfect rumours—the dark and suspicious evidence,—all combined to make a tale of such marvellous incident, and breeding such endless conjecture, that we cannot wonder to find it afterwards received a place, not only in the temporary chronicles, but even in the permanent histories of the period.

Previous to Walter's departure from Knarsbro' to Grassdale, and immediately subsequent to the discovery at St Robert's Cave, the coroner's inquest had been held upon the bones so mysteriously and suddenly brought to light. Upon the witness of the old woman at whose house Aram had lodged, and upon that of Housman, aided by some circumstantial and less weighty evidence, had been issued that warrant on which we have seen the prisoner apprehended.

With most men there was an intimate and indignant persuasion of Aram's innocence; and at this day, in the county where he last resided, there still lingers the same belief. Firm as his Gospel faith, that conviction rested in the mind of the worthy Lester; and he sought, by every means he could devise, to soothe and cheer the confinement of his friend. In prison, however, indeed after his examination—after Aram had made himself thoroughly acquainted with all the circumstantial evidence which identified Clarke with Geoffrey Lester,—a story that till then he had persuaded himself wholly to disbelieve, a change which, in the presence of Madeline or her father, he vainly attempted wholly to conceal, and to which, when alone, he surrendered himself with a gloomy abstraction—came over his mind, and dashed him from the lofty height of phil-

* "Lara."

reply from which he had before looked down on the peril and the ill-brew.

Sometimes he would gaze on Lester with a strange and glassy eye, and mutter inaudibly to himself, as if unaware of the old man's presence; at others, he would shrink from Lester's proffered hand, and start abruptly from his professions of unaltered, unalterable regard; sometimes he would sit silently, and, with a changeless and stoney countenance, look upon Madeline as she now spoke in that exalted tone of consolation which had passed away from him; if, and when she had done, instead of replying to her speech, he would say abruptly,—“Ay, at the worst you love me, then—love me better than any one on earth—say that, Madeline, again say that!”

And Madeline's trembling lips obeyed the demand.

“Yes,” he would renew, “this man, whom they accuse me of murdering, this,—your uncle,—him you never saw since you were an infant, a mere infant; him you could not love! What was he to you?—yet it is dreadful to think of—dreadful, dreadful!” and then again his voice ceased; but his lips moved convulsively, and his eyes seemed to speak meanings that defied words. These alterations in his bearing, which belied his steady and resolute character, astonished and dejected both Madeline and her father. Sometimes they thought that his situation had shaken his reason, or that the horrible suspicion of having murdered the uncle of his intended wife made him look upon themselves with a secret shudder, and that they were mingled up in his mind by no unnatural, though unjust confusion, with the causes of his present awful and uncertain state. With the generality of the world, these two tender friends believed Housman the sole and real murderer, and fancied his

charge against Aram was but the last expedient of a villain to ward punishment from himself, by imputing crime to another. Naturally then, they frequently sought to turn the conversation upon Housman, and on the different circumstances that had brought him acquainted with Aram—but on this ground the prisoner seemed morbidly sensitive, and averse to detailed discussion. His narration, however, such as it was, threw much light upon certain matters on which Madeline and Lester were before anxious and inquisitive.

“Housman is, in all ways,” said he, with great and bitter vehemence, “unredeemed, and beyond the calculations of an ordinary wickedness; we knew each other from our relationship, but seldom met, and still more rarely held long intercourse together. After we separated, when I left Knarresbro', we did not meet for years. He sought me at Grassdale; he was poor, and implored assistance; I gave him all within my power; he sought me again, nay, more than once again, and finding me justly averse to yielding to his extortionate demands, he then branched the purpose he has now effected, he threatened—you hear me—you understand—he threatened me with this charge—the murder of Daniel Clarke: by that name alone I knew the deceased. The menace, and the known villany of the man, agitated me beyond expression. What was I?—a being who lived without the world—who knew not its ways—who desired only rest! The menace haunted me—almost maddened! Your nephew has told you, you say, of broken words, of escaping emotions, which he has noted, even to suspicion, in me; you now behold the cause! Was it not sufficient? My life, nay more, my fame, my marriage, Madeline's peace of mind, all depended on the uncertain fury or craft of a wretch like this! The idea was with me might

and day, to avoid it I resolved on a sacrifice; you may blame me. I was weak, yet I thought then not unwisely, to avoid it, I say, I offered to believe this man to leave the country. I sold my patience to oblige him to it. I bound him thereto by the strongest ties. Nay, so disinterestedly, so truly did I love Madeline, that I would not waver, should I thought this danger could burst upon me. I believed that, before my marriage day, Housman had left the country. It was not so. Fate ordered otherwise. It seems that Housman came to Knaresdale to see his daughter; that suspicion, by a sudden train of events, fell on him—perhaps justly; to screen himself he has sacrificed me. The tale seems plausible; perhaps the accuser may trisoph. But, Madeline, you now may account for much that may have perplexed you before. Let me remember—ay, ay—I have dropped mysterious words—have I not—have I not—owning that danger was around me—owning that a wild and terrible secret was heavy at my breast, nay, once, walking with you the evening before—before the fatal day, I said that we must prepare to seek some yet more secluded spot, some deeper retirement; for despite my precautions, despite the supposed absence of Housman from the country itself, a froward and restless presence, must would at some times intrude about on me. All this is now accounted for, is it not, Madeline! Speak, speak!”

“All, love, all! Why do you look on me with that searching eye, that frowning brow?”

“Did I? No, no, I have no frown for you, but pause, I am not what I ought to be through this ordeal.”

The above narration of Aram's did indeed account to Madeline for much that had till then remained unexplained, the appearance of Housman at Grassdale, the meeting between

him and Aram on the evening she walked with the latter and questioned him of his ill-boding visitor; the frequent abstraction and muttered hints of her lover; and, as he had said, his last declaration of the possible necessity of leaving Grassdale. Nor was it improbable, though it was rather in accordance with the unworldly habits, than with the haughty character of Aram, that he should seek, circumstanced as he was, to silence even the false accuser of a plausible tale, that might well strike horror and bewilderment into a man much more, to all seeming, fitted to grapple with the hard and coarse realities of life, than the moody and secluded scholar. Be that as it may, though Lester deplored, he did not blame that circumstance, which after all had not transpired, nor seemed likely to transpire, and he attributed the prisoner's aversion to enter farther on the matter to the natural dislike of so proud a man to refer to his own weakness, and to dwell upon the manner in which, in spite of that weakness, he had been duped. This story Lester retailed to Walter, and it contributed to throw a damp and uncertainty over those mixed and unquiet feelings with which the latter waited for the coming trial. There were many moments when the young man was tempted to regret that Aram had not escaped a trial which, if he were proved guilty, would for ever blight the happiness of his family; and which might, notwithstanding such a verdict, leave on Walter's own mind an impression of the prisoner's innocence; and an uneasy consciousness that he, through his investigations, had brought him to that doom.

Walter remained in Yorkshire, seeing little of his family,—of none indeed but Lester; it was not to be expected that Madeline would see him, and once only he caught the fearful eyes of Eleanor as she retreated from the room he entered, and those

eyes beamed kindness and pity, but something also of reproach.

Time passed slowly and witheringly on, a man of the name of Terry having been included in the suspicion, and indeed committed, it appeared that the prosecutor could not procure witnesses by the customary time, and the trial was postponed till the next assizes. As this man was, however, never brought up to trial, and appears no more, we have said nothing of him in our narrative, until he thus became the instrument of a delay in the fate of Eugene Aram. Time passed on—winter, spring, were gone, and the glory and gloss of summer were now lavished over the happy earth. In some measure the usual calmness of his demeanour had returned to Aram; he had mastered those moody fits we have referred to, which had so afflicted his affectionate visitors; and he now seemed to prepare and buoy himself up against that awful ordeal of life and death which he was about soon to pass. Yet he—the hermit of Nature, who—

“Each little herb

That grows on mountain bleak, or tangled
forest,

Had learnt to name;” •—

he could not feel, even through the bars and checks of a prison, the soft summer air, “the witchery of the soft blue sky;” he could not see the leaves bud forth, and mellow into their darker verdure; he could not hear the songs of the many-voiced birds, or listen to the dancing rain, calling up beauty where it fell; or mark at night, through his high and narrow casement, the stars aloof, and the sweet moon pouring in her light, like God’s pardon, even through the dungeon-gloom and the desolate scenes where Mortality struggles with Despair; he could not catch, obstructed as they

were, these, the benigner influences of earth, and not sicken and pant for his old and full communion with their ministry and presence. Sometimes all around him was forgotten,—the harsh cell, the cheerless solitude, the approaching trial, the boding fear, the darkened hope, even the spectre of a troubled and fierce remembrance,—all was forgotten, and his spirit was abroad, and his step upon the mountain top once more.

In our estimate of the ills of life we never sufficiently take into our consideration the wonderful elasticity of our moral frame, the unlooked-for, the startling facility with which the human mind accommodates itself to all change of circumstance, making an object and even a joy from the hardest and seemingly the least redeemed conditions of fate. The man who watched the spider in his cell may have taken, at least, as much interest in the watch, as when engaged in the most ardent and ambitious objects of his former life. Let any man look over his past career, let him recall not *moments*, not *hours* of agony, for to them Custom lends not her blessed magic; but let him single out some *lengthened* period of physical or moral endurance: in hastily reverting to it, it may seem at first, I grant, altogether wretched; a series of days marked with the black stone—the clouds without a star: but let him look more closely, it was not so during the time of suffering; a thousand little things, in the bustle of life dormant and unheeded, *then* started forth into notice, and became to him objects of interest or diversion; the dreary present, once made familiar, glided away from him, not less than if it had been all happiness; his mind dwelt not on the dull intervals, but the stepping-stone it had created and placed at each; and, by that moral dreaming which for ever goes on within man’s secret heart, he lived as

• “Remorse,” by S. T. Coleridge.

little in the immediate world before him, as in the most sanguine period of his youth, or the most scheming of his maturity.

So wonderful in equalising all states and all times in the varying tide of life are these two rulers yet levellers of mankind, Hope and Custom, that the very idea of an eternal punishment includes that of an utter alteration of the whole mechanism of the soul in its human state; and no effort of an imagination, assisted by past experience, can conceive a state of torture which Custom can *never* blunt, and from which the chainless and immaterial spirit can *never* be beguiled into even a momentary escape.

Among the very few persons admitted to Aram's solitude was Lord That nobleman was staying, on a visit, with a relation of his in the neighbourhood, and he seized, with an excited and mournful avidity, the opportunity thus afforded him of seeing one more a character that had so often forced itself on his speculation and surprise. He came to offer, not condolence, but respect; *sympathy*, at such a moment, no individual could render—he gave, however, what was within his power—advice,—and pointed out to Aram the best counsel to engage, and the best method of previous inquiry into particulars yet unexplored. He was astonished to find Aram indifferent on those points so important. The prisoner it would seem, had even then resolved on being his own counsel, and conducting his own case; the event proved that he did not rely in vain on the power of his own eloquence and sagacity, though he might on their result. As to the rest, he spoke with impatience, and the persistence of a wronged man.

"For the idle rumours of the world, I do not care," said he; "let them condemn or acquit me as they will for my life, I might be willing, indeed, that it were spared,—I trust it may

be, if not, I can stand face to face with Death. I have now looked on him within those walls long enough to have grown familiar with his terrors. But enough of me. Tell me, my lord, something of the world without; I have grown eager about it at last. I have been now so condemned to feed upon myself, that I have become surfeited with the diet;" and it was with great difficulty that the earl drew Aram back to speak of himself: he did so, even when compelled to it, with so much qualification and reserve, mixed with some evident anger at the thought of being sifted and examined, that his visitor was forced finally to drop the subject; and not liking, indeed not able, at such a time, to converse on more indifferent themes, the last interview he ever had with Aram terminated much more abruptly than he had meant it. His opinion of the prisoner was not, however, shaken in the least. I have seen a letter of his to a celebrated personage of the day, in which, mentioning this interview, he concludes with saying:—"In short, there is so much real dignity about the man, that adverse circumstances increase it tenfold. Of his innocence I have not the remotest doubt; but if he persist in being his own counsel, I tremble for the result: you know, in such cases, how much more valuable is practice than genius. But the judge, you will say, is, in criminal causes, the prisoner's counsel; God grant he may here prove a successful one! I repeat, were Aram condemned by five hundred juries, I could not believe him guilty. No, the very essence of all human probabilities is against it."

The earl afterwards saw and conversed with Walter. He was much struck with the conduct of the young Lester, and much impressed with compassion for a situation so harassing and unhappy.

"Whatever be the result of the trial," said Walter, "I shall leave the country the moment it is finally over. If the prisoner be condemned, there is no hearth for me in my uncle's home; if not, my suspicions may still remain, and the sight of each other be an equal bane to the accused and to myself. A voluntary exile, and a life that may lead to forgetfulness, are all that I covet. I now find in my own person," he added, with a faint smile, "how deeply *Shakespeare* had read the mysteries of men's conduct. *Hamlet*, we are told, was naturally full of fire and action. One dark discovery quells his spirit, unstrings his heart, and stales to him for ever the uses of the world. I now comprehend the change. It is bodied forth even in the humblest individual, who is met by a similar fate—even in myself."

"Ay," said the earl, "I do indeed remember you a wild, impetuous, head-strong youth. I scarcely recognise your very appearance. The elastic spring has left your step—there seems a fixed furrow in your brow. These clouds of life are indeed no summer vapour, darkening one moment and gone the next. But, my young friend, let us hope the best. I firmly believe in Aram's innocence—firmly—more rootedly than I can express. The real criminal will appear on the trial. All bitterness between you and Aram must cease at his acquittal; you will be anxious to repair to him the injustice of a natural suspicion: and he seems not one who could long retain malice. All will be well, believe me."

"God grant it!" said Walter, sighing deeply.

"But at the worst," continued the earl, pressing his hand in parting, "if you should persist in your resolution to leave the country, write to me, and I can furnish you with an honourable and stirring occasion for doing so. Farewell!"

While time was thus advancing towards the fatal day, it was graving deep ravages within the pure breast of *Madeline Lester*. She had borne up, as we have seen, for some time, against the sudden blow that had shivered her young hopes, and separated her from so costly a chasm from the side of Aram; but as week after week, month after month rolled on, and he still lay in prison, and the horrible suspense of ignominy and death still hung over her, then gradually her courage began to fail, and her heart to sink. Of all the conditions to which the heart is subject, suspense is the one that most gnaws, and cankers into, the frame. One little month of that suspense, when it involves death, we are told, in a very remarkable work lately published by an eye-witness,* is sufficient to plough fixed lines and furrows in the face of a convict of five-and-twenty—sufficient to dash the brown hair with grey, and to bleach the grey to white. And this suspense—suspense of this nature—for more than eight whole months, had *Madeline* to endure!

About the end of the second month, the effect upon her health grew visible. Her colour, naturally delicate as the hues of the pink shell or the youngest rose, faded into one marble whiteness, which again, as time proceeded, flushed into that red and preternatural hue, which, once settled, rarely yields its place but to the colours of the grave. Her form shrank from its rounded and noble proportions. Deep hollows traced themselves beneath eyes which yet grew even more lovely as they grew less serenely bright. The blessed sleep sunk not upon her brain with its wonted and healing dews. Perturbed dreams, that towards dawn succeeded the long and weary vigil of the night, shook her frame even more

* See Mr. Wakefield's work *On the Punishment of Death*.

posted insuperable barriers to their union, which had not existed when it was first anticipated.

"Yes, let her die," he would say, "let her die; *she* at least is certain of heaven!" But the human infirmity clung around him, and notwithstanding this seeming resolution in her absence, he did not mourn the less, he was not stung the less, when he saw her again, and beheld a new character from the hand of death graven

upon her form. No, we may triumph over all weakness, but that of the affections! Perhaps in this dreary and haggard interval of time, those two persons loved each other more purely, more strongly, more enthusiastically, than they had ever done at any former period of their eventful history. Over the hardest stone, as over the softest turf, the green moss *will* force its verdure and sustain its life!

CHAPTER IV.

THE EVENING BEFORE THE TRIAL.—THE COUSINS.—THE CHANGE IN MADEIRA.—THE FAMILY OF GRASSDALE MEET ONCE MORE BENEATH ONE ROOF.

"Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows,
For Sorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing entire to many objects.

• • • • •

"Hope is a flatterer,
A parasite, a keeper back of death;
Who gently would dissolve the bands of death
Which false Hope lingers in extremity?"—*Richard II.*

It was the evening before the trial. Lester and his daughters lodged at a retired and solitary house in the suburbs of the town of York; and thither, from the village some miles distant, in which he had chosen his own retreat, Walter now proceeded across fields laden with the ripening corn. The last and the richest month of summer had commenced; but the harvest was not yet begun, and deep and golden showed the vegetation of life, bedded among the dark verdure of the hedge-row, and the "merrie woods!" The evening was serene and lulled; at a distance arose the spires and chimneys of the town, but no sound from the busy hum of men reached the ear. Nothing perhaps gives a more entire idea of stillness than the sight of those abodes where "noise dwelleth," but where you can-

not now hear even its murmurs. The stillness of a city is far more impressive than that of Nature; for the mind instantly compares the present silence with the wonted uproar. The harvest-moon rose slowly from a copse of gloomy firs, and infused its own unspeakable magic into the hush and transparency of the night. As Walter walked slowly on, the sound of voices from some rustic party going homeward broke joyfully on the silence, and when he paused for a moment at the stile, from which he first caught a glimpse of Lester's house, he saw, winding along the green hedge-row, some village pair, the "lover and the maid," who could meet only at such hours, and to whom such hours were therefore especially dear. It was altogether a scene of pure and true pastoral character, and

there was all around a semblance of tranquillity, of happiness, which suits with the poetical and the scriptural paintings of a pastoral life; and which perhaps, in a new and fertile country, may still find a realisation. From this scene, from these thoughts, the young listener turned with a sigh towards the solitary house in which this night could awaken none but the most anxious feelings, and that moon could beam only on the most troubled hearts.

• *Terra saintiferae herbas, eademque nocentes*

Natuit; et artem proxima arpe rosc est. •

He now walked more quickly on, as if stung by his reflections, and avoiding the path which led to the front of the house, gained a little garden at the rear; and opening a gate that admitted to a narrow and shaded walk, over which the linden and nut trees made a sort of continuous and natural arbour, the moon, piercing at broken intervals through the boughs, rested on the form of Ellinor Lester.

"This is most kind, most like my own sweet cousin," said Walter approvingly. "I cannot say how fearful I was, had you should not meet me after all."

"Indeed, Walter," replied Ellinor, "I found some difficulty in concealing your note, which was given me in Madeline's presence; and still more in standing out unobserved by her, for she has been, as you may well conceive, unusually restless the whole of this agitating day. Ah, Walter, would to God you had never left us!"

"Rather say," rejoined Walter, "Would that this unhappy man, against whom my father's action and seem to me to cry aloud, had never come into our peaceful and happy valley! Then you would not have

reproached me, that I have sought justice on a suspected murderer; nor I have longed for death rather than, in that justice, have inflicted such distress and horror on those whom I love the best!"

"What, Walter, you yet believe—you are yet convinced that Eugene Aram is the real criminal?"

"Let to-morrow show," answered Walter. "But poor, poor Madeline! How does she bear up against this long suspense! You know I have not seen her for months."

"Oh! Walter," said Ellinor, weeping bitterly; "you would not know her, so dreadfully is she altered. I fear" (here sobs choked the sister's voice, so as to leave it scarcely audible)—"that she is not many weeks for this world!"

"Just Heaven! is it so!" exclaimed Walter, so shocked, that the tree against which he leant scarcely preserved him from falling to the ground, as the thousand remembrances of his first love rushed upon his heart. "And Providence singled me out of the whole world, to strike this blow!"

Despite her own grief, Ellinor was touched and smitten by the violent emotion of her cousin; and the two young persons, lovers, though love was at this time the least perceptible feeling of their breast, mingled their emotions, and sought, at least, to console and cheer each other.

"It may yet be better than our fears," said Ellinor, soothingly. "Eugene may be found guiltless, and in that joy we may forget all the past."

Walter shook his head despondingly. "Your heart, Ellinor, was always kind to me. You now are the only one to do me justice, and to see how utterly reprehensible I am for all the misery the crime of another occasions. But my uncle—him, too, I have not seen for some time: is he well?"

• *The same earth produces health-bringing and deadly plants. — and ofttimes the rose grows nearest to the nettle.*

"Yes, Walter, yes," said Ellinor, kindly dismissing the real truth, how much her father's vigorous frame had been bowed by his state of mind. "And I, you see," added she, with a faint attempt to smile,—"I am, in health at least, the same as when, this time last year, we were all happy and full of hope."

Water looked hard upon that face, once so vivid with the rich colour and the buoyant and arch expression of liveliness and youth, now pale, subdued and worn by the traces of constant tears; and, pressing his hand convulsively on his heart, turned away.

"But can I not see my uncle?" said he, after a pause.

"He is not at home: he has gone to the Castle," replied Ellinor.

"I shall meet him, then, on his way home," returned Walter. "But, Ellinor, there is surely no truth in a vague rumour which I heard in the town, that Madeline intends to be present at the trial to-morrow?"

"Indeed, I fear that she will. Both my father and myself have sought strongly and urgently to dissuade her, but in vain. You know, with all that gentleness, how resolute she is when her mind is once determined on any object."

"But if the verdict should be against the prisoner, in her state of health consider how terrible would be the shock! Nay, even the joy of acquittal might be equally dangerous; for Heaven's sake, do not suffer her."

"What is to be done, Walter?" said Ellinor, wringing her hands. "We cannot help it. My father has, at last, forbid me to contradict the wish. Contradiction, the physician himself says, might be as fatal as concession can be. And my father adds, in a stern, calm voice, which it breaks my heart to hear, 'Be still, Ellinor. If the innocent is to perish, the sooner she joins him the better. I would

then have all my ties on the other side the grave!'"

"How that strange man seems to have fascinated you all!" said Walter, bitterly.

Ellinor did not answer: over her the fascination had never been to an equal degree with the rest of her family.

"Ellinor!" said Walter, who had been walking for the last few moments to and fro with the rapid strides of a man debating with himself, and who now suddenly paused, and laid his hand on his cousin's arm—"Ellinor! I am resolved. I must, for the quiet of my soul, I must see Madeline this night, and win her forgiveness for all I have been made the unintentional agent of Providence to bring upon her. The peace of my future life may depend on this single interview. What if Aram be condemned?—and—in short, it is no matter—I *must* see her."

"She would not hear of it, I fear," said Ellinor, in alarm. "Indeed, you cannot; you do not know her state of mind."

"Ellinor!" said Walter doggedly. "I am resolved." And so saying, he moved towards the house.

Well, then," said Ellinor, whose nerves had been greatly shattered by the scenes and sorrow of the last several months; "if it must be so, wait at least till I have gone in, and consulted or prepared her."

"As you will, my gentlest, kindest cousin; I know your prudence and affection. I leave you to obtain me this interview; you can, and will, I am convinced."

"Do not be sanguine, Walter. I can only promise to use my best endeavours," answered Ellinor, blushing as he kissed her hand; and, hurrying up the walk, she disappeared within the house.

Walter walked for some moments about the alley in which Ellinor had

le? Him, but growing impatient he at length wound through the overhanging trees, and the house stood immediately before him,—the moon-light shining full on the window-panes, and sleeping in quiet shadow over the green turf in front. He approached yet nearer, and through one of the windows, by a single light in the room, he saw Ellnor leaning over a couch, on which a form reclined, that his heart, rather than his eyes, told him was his once-adored Madeline. He stopped, and his breath heaved thick: he thought of their common home at Grassdale, of the old trarier house, of the little parlour, with the woodbine at its casement, of the group within, once so happy and light-hearted, of which he had formerly made the one most buoyant, and not least loved. And now this strange, this desolate house, himself estranged from all once regarding him and those broken-hearted, this night ushering what a morrow! He gazed almost dumb, and retreated once more into the shadow of the trees. In a few minutes the door at the right of the building opened, and Ellnor came forth with a quick step.

"Come in, dear Walter," said she; "Madeline has consented to see you: now, when I told her you were here, and desired an interview, she paused but for one instant, and then begged me to admit you."

"God bless her!" said poor Walter, drawing his hand across his eyes, and following Ellnor to the door.

"You will find her greatly changed!" whispered Ellnor, as they gained the outer hall; "be prepared!"

Walter did not reply, save by an expressive gesture, and Ellnor led him into a room, which communicated by one of those glass doors often to be seen in the old-fashioned houses of country towns, with the one in which he had previously seen Ma-

deline almost holding his breath, he followed his fair guide through the apartment, and he now stood by the couch on which Madeline still reclined. She held out her hand to him—he pressed it to his lips, without daring to look her in the face; and after a moment's pause, she said—

"So, you wished to see me, Walter! It is an anxious night this for all of us!"

"For all!" repeated Walter, emphatically; "and for me not the least!"

"We have known some sad days since we last met!" renewed Madeline: and there was another and an embarrassed pause.

"Madeline—dearest Madeline!" said Walter, and at length dropping on his knee, "you, whom while I was yet a boy, I so fondly, passionately loved;—you who yet are—who, while I live, ever will be, so inexpressibly dear to me—say but one word to me in this uncertain and dreadful epoch of our fate—say but one word to me—say you feel you are conscious that throughout these terrible events I have not been to blame—I have not willingly brought this affliction upon our house—least of all upon that heart which my own would have forfeited its best blood to preserve from the slightest evil;—or, if you will not do me this justice, say at least that you forgive me!"

"I forgive you, Walter!—I do, you justice, my cousin!" replied Madeline, with energy; and raising herself on her arm. "It is long since I have felt how unreasonable it was to throw any blame upon you—the mere and passive instrument of fate. If I have forborne to see you, it was not from an angry feeling, but from a reluctant weakness. God bless and preserve you, my dear cousin! I know that your own heart has bled as profusely as ours; and it was but this day that I told my father, if we never met

again, to express to you some kind message as a last memorial from me. Don't weep, Walter! It is a fearful thing to see *men* weep! It is only once that I have seen *him* weep,—that was long, long ago! He has no tears in the hour of dread and danger. But no matter: this is a bad world, Walter, and I am tired of it. Are not you? Why do you look so at me, Ellinor! I am not mad! Has she told you that I am, Walter? Don't believe her! Look at me! I am calm and collected! Yet to-morrow is — O God! O God!—if—if! —”

Madeline covered her face with her hands, and became suddenly silent, though only for a short time; when she again lifted up her eyes, they encountered those of Walter; as through those blinding and agonised tears, which are wrung from the grief of manhood, he gazed upon that face on which nothing of herself, save the divine and unearthly expression which had always characterised her loveliness, was left.

“Yes, Walter, I am wearing fast away—fast beyond the power of chance! Thank God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, if the worst happen, we cannot be divided long. Ere another Sabbath has passed, I may be with him in Paradise. What cause shall we then have for regret!”

Ellinor flung herself on her sister's neck, sobbing violently.—“Yes, we shall regret you are not with us, Ellinor; but you will also soon grow tired of the world; it is a sad place—it is a wicked place—it is full of snares and pitfalls. In our walk to-day lies our destruction for to-morrow! You will find this soon, Ellinor! And you, and my father, and Walter, too, shall join us! Hark! the clock strikes! By this time to-morrow night, what triumph!—or to me at least (sinking her voice into a whisper, that thrilled through the very bones of her listeners), *what peace!*”

Happily for all parties, this distressing scene was here interrupted. Lester entered the room with the heavy step into which his once elastic and cheerful tread had subsided.

“Ha, Walter!” said he, irresolutely glancing over the group; but Madeline had already sprung from her seat.

“You have seen him!—you have seen him! And how does he—how does he look? But that I know; I know his brave heart does not sink. And what message does he send to me? And—and—tell me all, my father; quick, quick!”

“Dear, miserable child!—and miserable old man!” muttered Lester, folding her in his arms; “but we ought to take courage and comfort from him, Madeline. A hero, on the eve of battle, could not be more firm—even more cheerful. He smiled often—his old smile; and he only left tears and anxiety to us. But of you, Madeline, we spoke mostly: he would scarcely let me say a word on any thing else. Oh, what a kind heart!—what a noble spirit! And perhaps a chance to-morrow may quench both. But, God! be just, and let the avenging lightning fall on the real criminal, and not blast the innocent man!”

“Amen!” said Madeline, deeply.

“Amen!” repeated Walter, laying his hand on his heart.

“Let us pray!” exclaimed Lester, animated by a sudden impulse, and falling on his knees. The whole group followed his example; and Lester, in a trembling and impassioned voice, poured forth an extempore prayer, that justice might fall only where it was due. Never did that majestic and pausing moon, which filled the lowly room as with the presence of a spirit, witness a more impressive adjuration, or an audience more absorbed and rapt. Full-streamed its holy rays upon the now snowy locks and upward countenance of Lester,

making his venerable person more striking from the contrast it afforded to the dark and sunburnt cheek—the energetic features, and chivalric and earnest head of the young man beside him. Just in the shadow, the raven locks of Ellinor were bowed over her clasped hands,—nothing of her face visible; the graceful neck and heaving breast alone distinguished from the shadow;—and, hushed in a death-

like and solemn repose, the parted lips moving inaudibly; the eye fixed on vacancy; the wan, transparent hands, crossed upon her bosom, the light shone with a more softened and tender ray, upon the faded but all-angelic form and countenance of *her*, for whom Heaven was already preparing its eternal recompense for the ills of Earth!

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIAL.

"Equal to either fortune."—Speech of Eugene Aram.

A THOUGHT comes over us, sometimes, in our career of pleasure, or the troubled exultation of our ambitious pursuits: a thought comes over us, like a cloud;—that around us and about us Death—Shame—Crime—Despair, are busy at their work. I have read somewhere of an enchanted land, where the inmates walked along voluptuous gardens, and built palaces, and heard music, and made merry: while around, and within, the land, were deep caverns, where the gnomes and the fiends dwelt: and over and about their groans and laughter, and the sounds of their unutterable toils, or ghastly revels, travelled to the upper air, mixing in an awful strangeness with the summer festivity and buoyant occupation of those above. And this is the picture of human life! These reflections of the maddening disparities of the world are dark, but salutary:—

"They wrap our thoughts at banquets in the crowd,"

—but we are seldom sadder without being also wiser men!

The third of August, 1759, rose

bright, calm, and clear; it was the morning of the trial; and when Ellinor stole into her sister's room, she found Madeline sitting before the glass, and braiding her rich locks with an evident attention and care.

"I wish," said she, "that you had pleased me by dressing as for a holiday. See, I am going to wear the dress I was to have been married in."

Ellinor shuddered; for what is more appalling than to find the signs of gaiety accompanying the reality of anguish!

"Yes," continued Madeline, with a smile of inexpressible sweetness, "a little reflection will convince you that this day ought not to be one of mourning. It was *the suspense* that has so worn out our hearts. If he is acquitted, as we all believe and trust, think how appropriate will be the outward seeming of our joy! If not, why I shall go before him to our marriage home, and in marriage garments. Ay," she added, after a moment's pause, and with a much more grave, settled, and intense expression of voice and countenance—"ay; do you remember how Eugene once told us, that if we went at noonday to the

bottom of a deep pit,* we should be able to see the stars, which on the level ground are invisible? Even so, from the depths of grief—worn, wretched, scared, and dying—the blessed apparitions and tokens of heaven make themselves visible to our eyes. And I know—I have seen—I feel here,” pressing her hand on her heart, “that my course is run; a few sands only are left in the glass. Let us waste them bravely. Stay, Ellinor! You see these poor withered rose-leaves? Eugene gave them to me the day before—before that fixed for our marriage. I shall wear them to-day, as I would have worn them on the wedding-day. When he gathered the poor flower, how fresh it was; and I kissed off the dew; *now see it!* But, come, come; this is trifling: we must not be late. Help me, Nell, help me: come, bustle, quick, quick! Nay, be not so slovenly; I told you I would be dressed with care to-day.”

And when Madeline *was* dressed, though the robe sat loose and in large folds over her shrunken form, yet, as she stood erect, and looked with a smile that saddened Ellinor more than tears at her image in the glass, perhaps her beauty never seemed of a more striking and lofty character,—she looked indeed, a bride, but the bride of no earthly nuptials. Presently they heard an irresolute and trembling step at the door, and Lester knocking, asked if they were prepared.

“Come in, father,” said Madeline, in a calm and even cheerful voice; and the old man entered.

He cast a silent glance over Madeline’s white dress, and then at his own, which was deep mourning: the glance said volumes, and its meaning was not marred by words from any one of the three.

“Yes, father,” said Madeline, breaking the pause.—“We are all ready. Is the carriage here?”

“It is at the door, my child.”

“Come then, Ellinor, come!” and leaning on her arm, Madeline walked towards the door. When she got to the threshold, she paused, and looked round the room.

“What is it you want?” asked Ellinor.

“I was but bidding all here farewell,” replied Madeline, in a soft and touching voice. “And now before we leave the house, father,—sister, one word with you;—you have *ever* been very, very kind to me, and most of all in this bitter trial, when I must have taxed your patience sadly—for I know all is not right here (touching her forehead),—I cannot go forth this day without thanking you. Ellinor, my dearest friend—my fondest sister—my playmate in gladness—my comforter in grief—my nurse in sickness:—since we were little children, we have talked together, and laughed together, and wept together, and though we knew all the thoughts of each other, we have never known one thought that we would have concealed from God;—and now we are going to part!—do not stop me, it must be so, I know it. But, after a little while may you be happy again; not so busyant as you have been—that can never be, but still happy! You are formed for love and home, and for those ties you once thought would be mine. God grant that I may have suffered for us both, and that when we meet hereafter you may tell me you have been happy here!”

“But you, father,” added Madeline, tearing herself from the neck of her weeping sister, and sinking on her knees before Lester, who leaned against the wall convulsed with his emotions, and covering his face with his hands—“but you,—what can I say to you? You, who have never,—no, not in my

* The remark is in Aristotle. Buffon quotes it, with his usual adroit felicity. *on*, I think, the first volume of his great work.

first childhood, said one harsh word to me—who have sunk all a father's authority in a father's love,—how can I say all that I feel for you?—the grateful overwhining painful, yet oh, how sweet! remembrances which crowd around and suffocate me now?—The time will come when Esther and Esther's children must be all in all to you—when of your poor Madeline nothing will be left but a memory; but they, they will watch on you and tend you, and protect your grey hairs from sorrow, as I might once have hoped I also was fated to do."

"My child! my child! you break my heart!" faltered forth at last the poor old man, who till now had in vain endeavored to speak.

"Give me your blessing, dear father," said Madeline, herself overcome by her feelings—"Put your hand on my head and bless me—and say, that if I have ever unconsciously given you a moment's pain, I am forgiven."

"Forgiven!" repeated Lester, raising his daughter with weak and trembling arms as his tears fell fast upon her cheek—"never did I feel that an angel had outshone my hearth till now! But be comforted—be cheered. What if Heaven had reserved its reviving mercy till this day, and Eugene be restored us, free acquitted, to our home before the night?"

"Ha!" said Madeline, as if suddenly roused by the thought into new life—"ha! let us hasten to find your words true. Yes! yes!—if it should be so—if it should. And" added she, in a hollow voice, "the enthusiasm shook," "if it were not for my dreams, I might believe it would be so—But—come—I am ready now!"

The carriage went slowly through the crowd that the fame of the approaching trial had gathered along the streets, but the blinds were drawn down, and the father and daughter

escaped that worst of tortures, the curious gaze of strangers on distress. Places had been kept for them in court, and as they left the carriage and entered the fatal spot, the venerable figure of Lester, and the trembling and veiled forms that clung to him, arrested all eyes. They at length gained their seats, and it was not long before a bustle in the court drew all attention from them. A buzz, a murmur, a movement, a dread pause! Houseman was first arraigned on his former indictment, acquitted, and admitted evidence against Aram, who was thereupon assigned. The prisoner stood at the bar! Madeline gasped for breath, and clung, with a convulsive motion, to her sister's arm. But presently, with a long sigh, she recovered her self-possession, and sat quiet and silent, fixing her eyes upon Aram's countenance; and the aspect of that countenance was well calculated to sustain her courage, and to mingle a sort of exulting pride with all the strained and fearful acuteness of her sympathy. Something, indeed, of what he had suffered was visible in the prisoner's features: the lines around the mouth, in which mental anxiety generally the most deeply writes its traces, were grown marked and furrowed; grey hairs were here and there scattered amongst the rich and long luxuriance of the dark brown locks, and as, before his imprisonment, he had seemed considerably younger than he was, so now time had atoned for its past delay, and he might have appeared to have told more years than had really gone over his head; but the remarkable light and beauty of his eye was undimmed as ever, and still the broad expanse of his forehead retained its unwrinkled surface and striking expression of calmness and majesty. High, self-collected, serene, and undaunted, he looked upon the crowd, the scene, the judge, before and around him; and, even on those

who believed him guilty, that involuntary and irresistible respect which moral firmness always produces on the mind, forced an unwilling interest in his fate, and even a reluctant hope of his acquittal.

Houseman was called upon. No one could regard his face without a certain mistrust and inward shudder. In men prone to cruelty, it has generally been remarked, that there is an animal expression strongly prevalent in the countenance. The murderer and the lustful man are often alike in the physical structure. The bull-throat—the thick lips—the reeding forehead—the fierce, restless eye, which some one or other says reminds you of the buffalo in the instant before he becomes dangerous, are the outward tokens of the natural animal unsoftened—unenlightened—unredeemed—consulting only the immediate desires of his nature, whatever be the passion (lust or revenge) to which they prompt. And this animal expression, the witness of his character, was especially stamped upon Houseman's rugged and harsh features; rendered, if possible, still more remarkable at that time by a mixture of sullenness and timidity. The conviction that his own life was saved, could not prevent remorse at his treachery in accusing his comrade—a confused principle of honour of which villains are the most susceptible when every other honest sentiment has deserted them.

With a low, choked, and sometimes a faltering tone, Houseman deposed, that, in the night between the 7th and 8th of January, 1744-5, some time before eleven o'clock, he went to Aram's house; that they conversed on different matters; that he stayed there about an hour; that some three hours afterwards he passed, in company with Clarke, by Aram's house, and Aram was outside the door, as if he were about to return home;

that Aram invited them both to come in; that they did so; that Clarke, who intended to leave the town before day break, in order, it was acknowledged, to make secretly away with certain property in his possession, was about to quit the house, when Aram proposed to accompany him out of the town; that he (Aram) and Houseman then went forth with Clarke; that when they came into the field where St. Robert's Cave is, Aram and Clarke went into it, over the hedge, and when they came within six or eight yards of the cave, he saw them quarrelling; that he saw Aram strike Clarke several times, upon which Clarke fell, and he never saw him rise again; that he saw no instrument Aram had, and knew not that he had any; that upon this, without any interposition or alarm, he left them and returned home; that the next morning he went to Aram's house, and asked what business he had with Clarke last night, and what he had done with him! Aram replied not to this question; but threatened him, if he spoke of his being in Clarke's company that night; vowing revenge, either by himself or some other person, if he mentioned any thing relating to the affair. This was the sum of Houseman's evidence.

A Mr. Beckwith was next called, who deposed that Aram's garden had been searched, owing to a vague suspicion that he might have been an accomplice in the frauds of Clarke; that some parts of clothing, and also some pieces of cambrie which he had sold to Clarke a little while before, were found there.

The third witness was the watchman, Thomas Barnet, who deposed, that before midnight (it might be a little after eleven) he saw a person come out from Aram's house, who had a wide coat on, with the cape about his head, and seemed to shun him; whereupon he went up to him, and

put by the cape of his great coat, and perceived it to be Richard Hunsman. He contented himself with wishing him good night.

The officers who executed the warrant then gave their evidence as to the arrest, and dwelt on some expressions dropped by Aram before he arrived at Keatesborough, which, however, were felt to be wholly unimportant.

After this evidence there was a short pause—and then a shiver,—that recoil and tremor which men feel at any exposition of the relics of the dead—ran through the court; for the next witness was mute—it was the skull of the deceased! On the left side there was a fracture, that from the nature of it seemed as it could only have been made by the stroke of some blunt instrument. The piece was broken, and could not be replaced but from within.

The surgeon, Mr. Loosck, who produced it, gave it as his opinion that no such breach could proceed from natural decay—that it was not a recent fracture, by the instrument with which it was dug up, but seemed to be of many years' standing.

This made the chief part of the evidence against Aram; the minor points we have omitted, and also such as, like that of Aram's hostess, would merely have repeated what the reader knew before.

And now closed the criminatory evidence—and now the prisoner was asked, the thrilling and awful question—"What he had to say in his own behalf!" Till now, Aram had not changed his posture or his countenance—his dark and piercing eye had for one instant fixed on each witness that appeared against him, and then dropped its gaze upon the ground. But at this moment, a faint hectic flushed his cheek, and he seemed to gather and knit himself up for defence. He glanced round the

court, as if to see what had been the impression created against him. His eye rested on the grey locks of Rowland Lester, who, looking down, had covered his face with his hands. But beside that venerable form was the still and marble face of Madeline; and even at that distance from him, Aram perceived how intent was the hushed suspense of her emotions. But when she caught his eye—that eye which, even at such a moment, beamed unutterable love, pity, regret for her—a wild, a convulsive smile of encouragement, of anticipated triumph, broke the repose of her colourless features, and suddenly dying away, left her lips apart, in that expression which the great masters of old, faithful to nature, give alike to the struggle of hope and the pause of terror.

"My lord," began Aram, in that remarkable defence still extant, and still considered as wholly unequalled from the lips of one defending his own cause;—"my lord, I know not whether it is of right, or through some indulgence of your lordship, that I am allowed the liberty at this bar, and at this time, to attempt a defence: incapable and un instructed as I am to speak. Since, while I see so many eyes upon me, so numerous and awful a concourse, fixed with attention, and filled with I know not what expectancy, I labour, not with guilt, my lord, but with perplexity. For, having never seen a court but this, being wholly unacquainted with law, the customs of the bar, and all judicary proceedings, I fear I shall be so little capable of speaking with propriety, that it might reasonably be expected to exceed my hope, should I be able to speak at all.

"I have heard, my lord, the indictment read, wherein I find myself charged with the highest of human crimes. You will grant me, then, your patience, if I, single and unskilled, destitute of friends, and unassisted

by counsel, attempt something, perhaps, like argument, in my defence. What I have to say will be but short, and that brevity may be the best part of it.

"My lord, the tenor of my life contradicts this indictment. Who can look back over what is known of my former years, and charge me with one vice—one offence? No! I concerted not schemes of fraud—projected no violence—injured no man's property or person. My days were honestly laborious—my nights intensely studious. This egotism is not presumptuous—is not unreasonable. What man, after a temperate use of life, a series of thinking and acting regularly, without one single deviation from a sober and even tenor of conduct, ever plunged into the depth of crime precipitately, and at once? Mankind are not instantaneously corrupted. Villany is always progressive. We decline from right—not suddenly, but step after step.

"If my life in general contradicts the indictment, my health, at that time in particular, contradicts it more. A little time before, I had been confined to my bed—I had suffered under a long and severe disorder. The distemper left me but slowly, and in part. So far from being well at the time I am charged with this fact, I never, to this day, perfectly recovered. Could a person in this condition execute violence against another (—I, feeble and valetudinary, with no inducement to engage—no ability to accomplish—no weapon wherewith to perpetrate such a fact;—without interest, without power, without motives, without means!

"My lord, Clarke disappeared; true: but is that a proof of his death? The fallibility of all conclusions of such a sort, from such a circumstance, is too obvious to require instances. One instance is before you: this very castle affords it.

"In June 1757, William Thompson, amidst all the vigilance of this place, in open daylight, and double ironed, made his escape; notwithstanding an immediate inquiry set on foot—notwithstanding all advertisements, all search, he was never seen or heard of since. If this man escaped unseen, through all these difficulties, how easy for Clarke, whom no difficulties opposed! Yet what would be thought of a prosecution commenced against any one seen last with Thompson?

"These bones are discovered! Where? Of all places in the world, can we think of any one, except, indeed, the churchyard, where there is so great a certainty of finding human bones, as a hermitage? In time past, the hermitage was a place, not only of religious retirement, but of burial. And it has scarce, or never been heard of, but that every cell now known contains or contained these relics of humanity; some mutilated—some entire! Give me leave to remind your lordship, that here sat SOLITARY SANCTITY, and here the hermit and the anchorite hoped that repose for their bones when dead, they here enjoyed when living. I glance over a few of the many evidences that these cells were used as repositories of the dead, and enumerate a few of the many caves similar in origin to St. Robert's, in which human bones have been found." Here the prisoner instanced, with remarkable felicity, several places in which bones had been found, under circumstances, and in spots, analogous to those in point.* And the reader, who will remember that it is the great principle of the law, that no man can be condemned for murder, unless the remains of the deceased be found, will perceive at once how important this point was to the prisoner's defence. After concluding his instances with two facts, of skeletons found in fields

* See his published defence.

in the vicinity of Kinrossbro', he burst forth—

"Is, then, the invention of those bones forgotten or industriously concealed, that the discovery of these in question may appear the more extraordinary? Extraordinary—yet how common an event? Every place conceals such remains. In fields—in hills—in highway sides—in wastes—in caverns, we frequent and unsuspected ones. And mark, for example, perhaps, occurs of more than one skeleton being found in one cell. Here you find but one, agreeable to the peculiarity of every known cell in Britain. Had two skeletons been discovered, then alone might the fact have seemed suspicious and uncommon. What? Have we forgotten how difficult, as in the case of Perkin Warbur and Lambert Symonds, it has been sometimes to identify the living, and shall we now listen passively to bones—bones which may belong to either sex? How know you that this is even the skeleton of a man? But another skeleton was discovered by some labourer! Was not that skeleton averred to be Clarke's, full as confidently as this?

"My lord, my lord—must some of the living be made answerable for all the bones that earth has concealed, and claims exposed? The skull that has been produced, has been declared fractured. But who can surely tell whether it was the cause or the consequence of death? In May 1772, the remains of William Lord Archbishop of this province were taken up by permission in their cathedral; the bones of the skull were found broken, as these are; yet he died by no violence;—by no blow that could have caused that fracture. Let it be considered how easily the fracture on the skull produced is accounted for. At the description of religious houses, the ravages of the times allotted here, the living and the dead. In search

after imaginary treasures, coffins were broken, graves and vaults dug open, monuments ransacked, shrines demolished; parliament itself was called in to restrain these violations. And now, are the depredations, the iniquities of those times to be visited on this? But here, above all, was a castle vigorously besieged, every spot around was the scene of a sally, a conflict, a flight, a pursuit. Where the slaughtered fell, there were they buried. What place is not burial earth in war? How many bones must still remain in the vicinity of that siege, for futurity to discover! Can you, then, with so many probable circumstances, choose the one least probable? Can you impute to the living what zeal in its fury may have done; what nature may have taken off and piety interred; or what war alone may have destroyed, alone deposited?

"And now, glance over the circumstantial evidence—how weak—how frail! I almost scorn to *allude* to it. I will not condescend to *dwelt* upon it. The witness of one man,—arraigned himself! Is there no chance, that, to save his own life, he might conspire against mine?—no chance, that he might have committed this murder, if murder hath indeed been done! that conscience betrayed to his first exclamation! that craft suggested his throwing that guilt on me, to the knowledge of which he had unwittingly confessed! He declares that he saw me strike Clarke—that he saw him fall; yet he utters no cry, no reproach. He calls for no aid; he returns quietly home; he declares that he knows not what became of the body, yet he tells where the body is laid. He declares that he went straight home, and alone; yet the woman with whom I lodged, deposes that Hecsteman and I returned to my house in company together. What evidence is this? and from whom does it come?—ask yourselves. As for the

rest of the evidence, what does it amount to? The watchman sees Houseman leave my house at night. What more probable—but what less connected with the murder, real or supposed, of Clarke? Some pieces of clothing are found buried in my garden; but how can it be shown that they belonged to Clarke? Who can swear to—who can prove anything so vague? And if found there, even if belonging to Clarke, what proof that they were there deposited by me? How likely that the real criminal may, in the dead of night, have preferred any spot, rather than that round his own home, to conceal the evidence of his crime?

"How impotent such evidence as this! and how poor, how precarious, even the strongest of mere circumstantial evidence invariably is! Let it rise to probability, to the strongest degree of probability; it is but probability still. Recollect the case of the two Harrisons, recorded by Dr. Howell; both suffered on circumstantial evidence on account of the disappearance of a man, who, like Clarke, contracted debts, borrowed money, and went off unseen. And this man returned several years after their execution. Why remind you of Jacques du Moulin, in the reign of Charles the Second?—why of the unhappy Coleman, convicted, though afterwards found innocent, and whose children perished for want, because the world believed the father guilty? Why should I mention the perjury of Smith, who, admitted king's evidence, screened himself by accusing Fambloth and Loveday of the murder of Dunn? The first was executed, the second was about to share the same fate, when the perjury of Smith was incontrovertibly proved.

"And now, my lord, having endeavoured to show that the whole of this charge is altogether repugnant to every part of my life; that it is in-

consistent with my condition of health about that time; that no rational inference of the death of a person can be drawn from his disappearance; that hermitages were the constant repositories of the bones of the recluse; that the proofs of these are well authenticated; that the revolution in religion, or the fortunes of war, have mangled or buried the dead; that the strongest circumstantial evidence is often lamentably fallacious; that in my case, that evidence, so far from being strong, is weak, disconnected, contradictory,—what remains? A conclusion, perhaps, no less reasonably than impatiently wished for. I, at last, after nearly a year's confinement, equal to either fortune, intrust myself to the candour, the justice, the humanity of your lordship, and to yours, my countrymen, gentlemen of the jury."

The prisoner ceased; and the painful and choking sensations of sympathy, compassion, regret, admiration, all uniting, all mellowing into one fearful hope for his acquittal, made themselves felt through the crowded court.

In two persons only, an uneasy sentiment remained—a sentiment that the prisoner had not completed that which they would have asked from him. The one was Lester;—he had expected a more warm, a more earnest, though, perhaps, a less ingenious and artful defence. He had expected Aram to dwell far more on the improbable and contradictory evidence of Houseman; and above all, to have explained away all that was still left unaccounted for in his acquaintance with Clarke (as we will still call the deceased), and the allegation that he had gone out with him on the fatal night of the disappearance of the latter. At every word of the prisoner's defence, he had waited almost breathlessly, in the hope that the next sentence would begin an explanation or a denial on this point; and when

Aram ceased, a chill, a depression, a disappointment, remained vaguely on his mind. Yet so lightly and so thoughtfully had Aram approached and glanced over the immediate evidence of the witnesses against him, that his silence here might have been but the natural result of a disdain, that belonged essentially to his calm and proud character. The other person we referred to, and whom his defence had not impressed with a belief in its truth, equal to an admiration for its skill, was one far more important in deciding the prisoner's fate—it was the judge!

But Madeline—alas! alas! how sanguine is a woman's heart, when the innocence, the fate of the one she loves is concerned!—a radiant flush broke over a face so colourless before; and with a joyous look, a kindled eye, a bddy brow, she turned to Ellinor, pressed her hand in silence, and once more gave up her whole soul to the dread procedure of the court.

The judge now began.—It is greatly to be regretted, that we have no minute and detailed memorial of the trial, except only the prisoner's defence. The summing up of the judge was considered at that time scarcely less remarkable than the speech of the prisoner. He stated the evidence with peculiar care and at great length to the jury. He observed how the testimony of the other deponents confirmed that of Houseman; and then, touching on the contradictory parts of the latter, he made them understand how natural, how inevitable, was some such contradiction in a witness who had not only to give evidence against another, but to refrain from criminating himself. There could be no doubt but that Houseman was an accomplice in the crime; and all therefore that seemed improbable in his giving no alarm when the deed was done, &c. &c. was easily rendered natural and reconcilable with the

other parts of his evidence. Commenting then on the defiance of the prisoner (who, as if disdaining to rely on aught save his own genius or his own innocence, had called no witnesses, as he had employed no counsel), and eulogising its eloquence and art, till he destroyed their effect, by guarding the jury against that impression which eloquence and art produce in defiance of simple fact, he contended that Aram had yet alleged nothing to invalidate the positive evidence against him.

I have often heard, from men accustomed to courts of law, that nothing is more marvellous than the sudden change in the mind of a jury, which the summing up of the judge can produce; and in the present instance it was like magic. That fatal look of a common intelligence, of a common assent, was exchanged among the doomers of the prisoner's life and death as the judge concluded.

* * * * *

They found the prisoner guilty.

* * * * *

The judge drew on the black cap.

* * * * *

Aram received his sentence in profound composure. Before he left the bar, he drew himself up to his full height, and looked slowly around the court with that thrilling and almost sublime unmovedness of aspect, which belonged to him alone of all men, and which was rendered yet more impressive by a smile—slight but eloquent beyond all words—of a soul collected in itself, no forced and convulsive effort vainly masking the terror or the pang; no mockery of self that would mimic contempt for others, but more in majesty than bitterness; rather as daring fate than defying the judgment of others,—rather as if he wrapped himself in the independence of a quist, than the disdains of a despairing heart!

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH.—THE PRISON.—AN INTERVIEW.—ITS RESULT.

" . . . Lay her if the earth;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring.

See in my heart there was a kind of fighting
That would not let me sleep."—*Hamlet*.

"BEAR with me a little longer," said Madeline; "I shall be well, quite well presently."

Ellinor let down the carriage window to admit the air; and she took the occasion to tell the coachman to drive faster. There was that change in Madeline's voice which alarmed her.

"How noble was his look! you saw him smile!" continued Madeline, talking to herself. "And they will murder him after all. Let me see; this day week, ay, ere this day week, we shall meet again."

"Faster; for God's sake, Ellinor, tell them to drive faster!" cried Lester, as he felt the form that leaned on his bosom wax heavier and heavier. They sped on; the house was in sight; that lonely and cheerless house; not their sweet home at Grassdale, with the ivy round its porch, and the quiet church behind! The sun was setting slowly, and Ellinor drew the blind to shade the glare from her sister's eye.

Madeline felt the kindness, and smiled. Ellinor wiped her eyes, and tried to smile again. The carriage stopped, and Madeline was lifted out; she stood, supported by her father and Ellinor, for a moment on the threshold. She looked on the golden sun and the gentle earth, and the little notes

dancing in the western ray—all was steeped in quiet, and full of the peace and tranquillity of the pastoral life!

"No, no," she muttered, grasping her father's hand. "How is this! this is not *his* hand! Ah, no, no; I am not with him! Father," she added, in a louder and deeper voice, rising from his breast, and standing alone and unaided:—"father, bury this little packet with me, they are his letters; do not break the seal, and— and tell him that I never felt how deeply I—loved him—till all—the world—had—deserted him!—"

She uttered a faint cry of pain, and fell at once to the ground; she lived a few hours longer, but never made speech or sign, or evinced token of life but its breath, which died at last gradually—imperceptibly—away.

On the following evening Walter obtained entrance to Aram's cell: that morning the prisoner had seen Lester; that morning he had heard of Madeline's death. He had shed no tear; he had, in the affecting language of Scripture, "turned his face to the wall;" none had seen his emotions: yet Lester felt in that bitter interview that his daughter was duly mourned.

Aram did not lift his eyes when Walter was admitted, and the young

man stood almost at his knee before he punished him. Aram then looked up, and they gazed on each other for a moment, but without speaking, till Walter said in a hollow voice, —

"Eugene Aram!"

"Ay!"

"Madeline Lester is no more."

"I have heard it! I am reconciled. Retire now, then, later."

"Aram!" said Walter, in a tone trembling with emotion, and passionately clasping his hands, "I entreat, I implore you, at this awful time, if it be within your power, to lift from my heart a load that weighs it to the dust; that, if left there, will make me through life a crushed and miserable man—I implore you, in the name of common humanity, by your hopes of heaven, to remove it." The time now has irrevocably passed, when your denial or your confession could alter your doom; your days are numbered: there is no hope of reprieve. I implore you, then, if you were led—I will not ask how, or wherefore—to the execution of the crime for the charge of which you die to say, — to whisper to me but one word of confession, and I, the sole child of the murdered man, will forgive you from the bottom of my soul."

Walter paused, unable to proceed.

Aram's brow worked; he turned aside; he made no answer; his head dropped on his bosom, and his eyes were unmoveably fixed on the earth.

"Reflect," continued Walter, recovering himself,—"reflect! I have been the involuntary instrument in bringing you to this awful fate,—in destroying the happiness of my own home—in—in in breaking the heart of the woman whom I married even as a boy. If you be innocent, what a dreadful remembrance is left to me! Be merciful, Aram! be merciful, and if this deed was done by your hand, say to me but one word to remove the terrible uncertainty that now harrows

up my being. What now is earth, is man, is opinion, to you? God only now can judge you. The eye of God reads your heart while I speak; and, in the awful hour when eternity opens to you, if the guilt has been indeed committed, think,—oh, think how much lighter will be your offence if, by vanquishing the stubborn heart, you can relieve a human being from a doubt that otherwise will make the curse—the horror of an existence. Aram, Aram, if the father's death came from you, shall the life of the son be made a burthen to him through you also?"

"What would you have of me! speak!" said Aram, but without lifting his face from his breast.

"Much of your nature belies this crime. You are wise, calm, beneficent to the distressed. Revenge, passion,—nay, the sharp pangs of hunger may have urged you to one criminal deed: but your soul is not wholly hardened: nay, I think I can so far trust you, that if at this dread moment—the clay of Madeline Lester scarce yet cold, was busy and softening at your breast, and the son of the murdered dead before you;—if at this moment you can lay your hand on your heart, and say, 'Before God, and at peril of my soul, I am innocent of this deed,' I will depart,—I will believe you, and bear, as bear I may, the reflection, that I have been one of the unconscious agents in condemning to a fearful death an innocent man! If innocent in this—how good, how perfect, in all else! But, if you cannot at so dark a crisis take that oath,—then! oh then! be just—be generous, even in guilt, and let me not be haunted throughout life by the spectre of a ghastly and restless doubt! Speak! oh, speak!"

Well, well, may we judge how crushing must have been that doubt in the breast of one naturally bold and fiery, when it thus hounded the very son of the murdered man to forget

wrath and vengeance, and descend to prayer! But Walter had heard the defence of Aram; he had marked his man; not once in that trial had he taken his eyes from the prisoner, and he had felt, like a bolt of ice through his heart, that the sentence passed on the accused, *his* judgment could not have passed! How dreadful must, then, have been the state of his mind when, repairing to Lester's house, he found it the house of death—the pure, the beautiful spirit gone—the father mourning for his child, and not to be comforted—and Ellnor!—No! scenes like these, thoughts like these, pluck the pride from a man's heart!

"Walter Lester!" said Aram, after a pause; but raising his head with dignity, though on the features there was but one expression—woe, unutterable woe;—"Walter Lester! I had thought to quit life with my tale untold; but you have not appealed to me in vain! I tear the self from my heart!—I renounce the last haughty dream in which I wrapt myself from the ills around me. You shall learn all, and judge accordingly. But to your ear the tale can scarce be told:—the son cannot hear in silence that which, unless I too unjustly, too wholly condemn myself, I must say of the dead! But time," continued Aram, mutteringly, and with his eyes on vacancy, "time does not press too fast. Better let the hand speak than the tongue:—yes; the day of execution is—ay, ay—two days yet to it—to-morrow! no! Young man," he said abruptly, turning to Walter, "on the day after to-morrow, about seven in the evening—the eve before that morn fated to be my last—come to me. At that time I will place in your hands a paper containing the whole history that connects myself with your father. On the word of a man on the brink of another world, no truth that imports your interest therein shall be omitted. But read

it not till I am no more: and when read, confide the tale to none till Lester's grey hairs have gone to the grave. This swear! 'tis an oath difficult perhaps to keep, but:—"

"As my Redeemer lives, I will swear to both conditions!" cried Walter, with a solemn fervour. "But tell me now, at least:—"

"Ask me no more!" interrupted Aram, in his turn. "The time is near when you will know all! Tarry that time, and leave me! Yes, leave me now—at once—leave me!"

To dwell lingeringly over those passages which excite pain without satisfying curiosity, is scarcely the duty of the drama, or of that province even nobler than the drama; for it requires minuter care—indulges in more complete description—yields to more elaborate investigation of motives—commands a greater variety of chords in the human heart—to which, with poor and feeble power for so high, yet so ill-appreciated a task we now, not irreverently if rashly, aspire!

We glance not around us at the chamber of death—at the broken heart of Lester—at the two-fold agony of his surviving child—the agony which mourns and yet seeks to console another—the mixed emotions of Walter, in which an unsleeping eagerness to learn the fearful all formed the main part—the solitary cell and solitary heart of the convicted—we glance not at these;—we pass at once to the evening in which Aram again saw Walter Lester, and for the last time.

"You are come, punctual to the hour," said he, in a low clear voice: "I have not forgotten my word; the fulfilment of that promise has been a victory over myself which no man can appreciate: but I owed it to you. I have discharged the debt. Enough!—I have done more than I at first purposed. I have extended my nar

—Non, but superficially in some parts, over my life: that prolixity, perhaps, I owed to myself. Remember *your* promise: this seal is not broken till the pulse is stilled in the hand which now gives you these papers!"

Walter renewed his oath, and Aram, pausing for a moment, continued in an altered and softening voice,—

"Be kind to Lester: soothe, console him—never by a hint let him think otherwise of me than he does. For his sake more than mine I ask this. Venerable, kind old man! the warmth of human affection has rarely glowed for me. To the few who loved me, how deeply I have repaid the love! But these are not words to pass between you and me. Farewell! Yet, before we part, say this much: whatever I have revealed in this confession, —whatever has been my wrong to you, or whatever (a less offence) the language I have now, justifying myself, used to—to your father—say, that you grant me that pardon which one man may grant another."

"Fully cordially," said Walter.

"In the day that for you brings the death that to-morrow awaits me," said Aram, in a deep tone, "be that forgiveness accorded to yourself!

Farewell. In that untried variety of being which spreads beyond us, who knows but, that in our several progress from grade to grade, and world to world, our souls, though in far distant ages, may meet again!—one dim and shadowy memory of this hour the link between us: farewell—farewell!"

For the reader's interest we think it better (and certainly it is more immediately in the due course of narrative, if not of actual events) to lay at once before him the confession that Aram placed in Walter's hands, without waiting till that time when Walter himself broke the seal of a confession,—not of deeds alone, but of thoughts how wild and entangled—of feelings how strange and dark—of a starred soul that had wandered from how proud an orbit, to what perturbed and unholy regions of night and chaos! For me, I have not sought to derive the reader's interest from the vulgar sources that such a tale might have afforded; I have suffered him almost from the beginning, to pierce into Aram's secret; and I have prepared him for that guilt, with which other narrators of this story might have only sought to surprise.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONFESSION ; AND THE FATE.

"In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire
 With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales
 Of woeful ages long ago betid :
 And ere thou bidst good night, to quit their grief,
 Tell them the lamentable fall of me."—*Richard II.*

"I WAS born at Ramagrill, a little village in Netherdale. My family had originally been of some rank ; they were formerly lords of the town of Aram, on the southern banks of the Tees. But time had humbled these pretensions to consideration ; though they were still fondly cherished by the inheritors of an ancient name, and idle but haughty recollections. My father resided on a small farm, and was especially skillful in horticulture, a taste I derived from him. When I was about thirteen, the deep and intense passion that has made the demon of my life, first stirred palpably within me. I had always been, from my cradle, of a solitary disposition, and inclined to reverie and musing ; those traits of character heralded the love that now seized me—the love of knowledge. Opportunity or accident first directed my attention to the abstruser sciences. I poured my soul over that noble study, which is the best foundation of all true discovery ; and the success I met with soon turned my pursuits into more alluring-channels. History, poetry,—the mastery of the past, and the spell that admits us into the visionary world,—took the place which lines and numbers had done before. I became gradually more and more rapt and solitary in my habits ; knowledge assumed a yet more lovely and be-

witching character, and every day the passion to attain it increased upon me ; I do not,—I have not now the heart to do it—enlarge upon what I acquired without assistance, and with labour sweet in proportion to its intensity.* The world, the creation, all things that lived, moved, and were, became to me objects contributing to one passionate, and, I fancied, one exalted end. I suffered the lowlier pleasures of life, and the charms of its more common ties, to glide away from me untasted and unfelt. As you read, in the East, of men remaining motionless for days together, with their eyes fixed upon the heavens, my mind, absorbed in the contemplation of the things above its reach, had no sight of what passed around. My parents died, and I was an orphan. I had no home, and no wealth ; but wherever the field contained a flower, or the heavens a star, there was matter of thought, and food for delight, to me. I wandered alone for months together, seldom sleeping but in the open air, and shunning the human form as that part of God's works from which I could learn the least. I came to

* We learn from a letter of Eugene Aram's, now extant, that his method of acquiring the learned languages was to linger over five lines at a time, and never to quit a passage till he thought he had comprehended its meaning.

Knaresbro', the beauty of the country, a faculty in acquiring books from a neighbouring library that was open to me, made me resolve to settle there. And now, new desires opened upon me and new stores. I became haunted with the ambition to enlighten and instruct my race. At first, I had loved knowledge solely for itself. I now saw afar an object grander than knowledge. To what end, said I, are those labours? Why do I feed a lamp which consumes itself in a desert place? Why do I heap up riches, without asking who shall gather them? I was restless and discontented. What could I do? I was friendless, I was strange to my kind; I saw my desires checked when their aim was at the highest: all that was aspiring in my hopes, and ardent in my nature, was cramped and chilled. I exhausted the learning within my reach. Where, with my appetite excited, not slaked, was I, destitute and powerless, to search for more? My ambition, by bowing them to the lowliest tasks, but kept me from failure—was this to be my lot for ever? And all the while I was thus grinding down my soul in order to satisfy the vile physical wants, what golden hours, what glorious advantages, what openings into new heavens of science, what chances of illuminating mankind were for ever lost to me! Sometimes, when the young, to whom I taught some humble elements of knowledge, came around me; when they looked me in the face with their laughing eyes, when, for they all loved me, they told me their little pleasures and their petty sorrows, I have wished that I could have gone back again into childhood, and, becoming as one of them, enter into that heaven of quiet which was denied me now. Yet it was more often with an indignant than a sorrowful spirit that I looked upon my lot. For, there, by my life imprisoned in penury as in the walls

of a gaol—Heaven smiled and earth blossomed around, but how scale the stern barriers!—how steal through the inexorable gate? True, that by bodily labour I could give food to the body—to starve by such labour the craving wants of the mind. Beg I could not. When ever lived the real student, the true minister and priest of Knowledge, who was not filled with the lofty sense of the dignity of his calling? Was I to show the sores of my pride, and strip my heart from its clothing, and ask the dull fools of wealth not to let a scholar starve? No!—he whom the vilest poverty ever stooped to this, may be the quack, but never the true disciple, of Learning. What did I then? I devoted the meanest part of my knowledge to the procuring the bare means of life, and the knowledge that pierced to the depths of earth, and numbered the stars of heaven—why, that was valueless in the market!

"In Knaresbro', at this time, I met a distant relation, Richard Houseman. Sometimes in our walks we encountered each other; for he sought me, and I could not always avoid him. He was a man like myself, born to poverty, yet he had always enjoyed what to him was wealth. This seemed a mystery to me, and when we met, we sometimes conversed upon it. 'You are poor, with all your wisdom,' said he. 'I know nothing; but I am never poor. Why is this? The world is my treasury.—I live upon my kind.—Society is my foe.—Laws order me to starve; but self-preservation is an instinct more sacred than society, and more imperious than laws.'

"The audacity of his discourse revolted me. At first I turned away in disgust;—then I stood and heard—to ponder and inquire. Nothing so tasks the man of books as his first blundering guess at the problems of a giddy hour!—Houseman had been a soldier, he had seen the greatest part of Europe, he possessed a strong shrewd

sense; he was a villain;—but a villain bold, adroit, and not then thoroughly unredeemed. Trouble seized me as I heard him, and the shadow of his life stretched farther and darker over the wilderness of mine. When Houseman asked me, 'What law befriended the man without money?—to what end I had cultivated my mind?—or what good the voice of knowledge could effect while Poverty forbade it to be heard?' the answer died upon my lips. Then I sought to escape from these terrible doubts. I plunged again into my books. I called upon my intellect to defend,—and my intellect betrayed me. For suddenly as I pored over my scanty books, a gigantic discovery in science gleamed across me. I saw the means of effecting a vast benefit to truth and to man—of adding a new conquest to that only empire which no fate can overthrow, and no time wear away. And in this discovery I was stopped by the total inadequacy of my means. The books and implements I required were not within my reach—a handful of gold would buy them—I had not wherewithal to buy bread for the morrow's meal! In my solitude and misery this discovery haunted me like a visible form—it smiled upon me—a fiend that took the aspect of beauty—it wooed me to its charms that it might lure my soul into its fangs. I heard it murmur, 'One bold deed and I am thine! Wilt thou lie down in the ditch and die the dog's death, or hazard thy life for the means that may serve and illumine the world? Shrinkest thou from men's laws, though the laws bid thee rot on their outskirts? Is it not for the service of man that thou shouldst for once break the law on behalf of that knowledge from which all laws take their source? If thou wrongest the one, thou shalt repay it in atoms to the million. For the ill of an hour thou shalt give a blessing

to ages!' So spoke to me the tempter. And one day, when the tempter spoke loudest, Houseman met me, accompanied by a stranger who had just visited our town, for what purpose you know already. His name—supposed name—was Clarke. Man, I am about to speak plainly of that stranger—his character and his fate. And yet—yet you are his son! I would fain soften the colouring; but I speak truth of myself, and I must not, unless I would blacken my name yet deeper than it deserves, varnish truth when I speak of others. Houseman joined, and presented to me this person. From the first I felt a dislike of the stranger, which indeed it was easy to account for. He was of a careless and somewhat insolent manner. His countenance was impressed with the lines and character of a thousand vices: you read in the brow and eye the history of a sordid yet reckless life. His conversation was repellent to me beyond expression. He uttered the meanest sentiments, and he chuckled over them as the maxims of a superior sagacity; he avowed himself a knave upon system, and upon the lowest scale. To over-reach, to deceive, to elude, to shuffle, to fawn and to lie, were the arts to which he confessed with so naked and cold a grossness, that one perceived that in the long habits of debasement he was unconscious of what was not debased. Houseman seemed to draw him out: Clarke told us anecdotes of his rascality, and the distresses to which it had brought him; and he finished by saying: 'Yet you see me now almost rich, and wholly contented. I have always been the luckiest of human beings: no matter what ill chances to-day, good turns up to-morrow. I confess that I bring on myself the ill, and Providence sends me the good.' We met accidentally more than once, and his conversation was

always of the same strain—his luck and his necessity; he had no other theme, and no other boast. And did not this aid the voice of the tempter? Was it not an ordination that called upon men to take vengeance in their own hands, when Fate has issued her rewards on this low and creeping thing, that could only enter over Vice by its sewers and alleys? Was it worth while to be virtuous, and look on, while the bad seized upon the feast of life? This man was but moved by the meanest passions, the pettiest desires: he gratified them, and Fate smiled upon his daring. I, who had shut out from my heart the poor temptations of sense—I, who fed only the most glorious visions, the most august desires—I, denied myself their fruition, trembling and spell-bound in the elements of human laws, without hope, without reward, losing the very powers of virtue because I would not stray into crime!

* These thoughts fell on me darkly and rapidly; but they led as yet to no result. I saw nothing beyond them. I suffered my indignation to gnaw my heart, and preserved the same calm and serene demeanour which had grown with my growth of mind. Stranger that while I upbraided Fate, I did not cease to love mankind. I could not cease to permit to serve them. I had been kind and loving to all things from a boy; there was not a dumb animal that would not single me from a crowd as its protector,* and yet

I was doomed—but I must not forestall the dread catastrophe of my life. In returning, at night, to my own home, from my long and solitary walks, I often passed the house in which Clarke lodged; and sometimes I met him reeling by the door, insulting all who passed; and yet their resentment was absorbed in their disgust. 'And this loathsome and groveling thing,' said I, 'inly, squanders on low excesses, wastes upon outrages to society, that with which I could make my soul as a burning lamp, that should shed a light over the world.'

There was that in the man's vices which revolted me far more than the villany of Houseman. The latter had possessed few advantages of education; he descended to no minutiae of sin; he was a plain, blunt, coarse wretch, and his sense threw something respectable around his vices. But in Clarke you saw the traces of happier opportunities, of better education; it was in him not the coarseness of manner that displeased, it was the lowness of sentiment that sickened me. Had Houseman money in his purse, he would have paid a debt and relieved a friend from mere bad fortune; not so the other. Had Clarke been overflowing with wealth, he would have clipped from a creditor and deplored a friend; there was a painful counting in his nature, which made him regard the lowest measures as the wisest wit. His mind, too, was not early degraded, but broken by his habits of life; he had the laugh of the idiot at his own debasement. Houseman was young; he might amend; but Clarke had grey hairs and dim eyes; was old in constitution, if not years; and every thing in him was hopeless and confirmed: the leprosy was in the system. Time, in this, has made Houseman what Clarke was then.

* One day, in passing through the street, though it was broad noon, I encountered Clarke in a state of im-

* All the authentic anecdotes of Aram corroborate the fact of his natural gentleness to all things. A clergyman (the Rev Mr. Hinton) went that he used frequently to observe Aram, when walking in the garden, stoop down to remove a snail or worm from the path, to prevent its being destroyed. Mr. Hinton conjectured that Aram would be stung for his crime by allowing mercy to every animal and insect; but the fact is, that there are several anecdotes to show that he was equally humane before the crime was committed. Such are the strange contradictions of the human heart.

toxication, and talking to a crowd he had collected around him. I sought to pass in an opposite direction; he could not suffer me; he, whom I sickened to touch, to see, threw himself in my way, and affected gibe and insult, nay, even threat. But when he came near, he shrank before the mere glance of my eye, and I passed on, unheeding him. The insult galled me; he had taunted my poverty—poverty was a favourite jest with him; it galled me: anger! revenge! no! those passions I had never felt for any man. I could not rouse them for the first time at such a cause; yet I was lowered in my own eyes, I was stung. Poverty! he taunt me! I wandered from the town, and paused by the winding and shagged banks of the river. It was a gloomy winter's day, the waters rolled on black and sullen, and the dry leaves rustled desolately beneath my feet. Who shall tell us that outward nature has no effect upon our mood? All around seemed to frown upon my lot. I read in the face of heaven and earth a confirmation of the curse which man hath set upon poverty. I leaned against a tree that overhung the waters, and suffered my thoughts to glide on in the bitter silence of their course. I heard my name uttered—I felt a hand on my arm, I turned, and Houseman was by my side.

"What! moralising!" said he, with his rude smile.

"I did not answer him.

"Look," said he, pointing to the waters, 'where yonder fish lies waiting his prey,—that prey his kind. Come, you have read Nature, is it not so universally?'

"Still I did not answer him.

"They who do not as the rest,' he renewed, 'fulfil not the object of their existence: they seek to be wiser than their tribe, and are fools for their pains. Is it not so? I am a plain man, and would learn.'

"Still I did not answer.

"You are silent," said he: 'do I offend you?'

"Not."

"Now, then," he continued, 'strange as it may seem, we, so different in mind, are at this moment alike in fortunes. I have not a guinea in the wide world; you, perhaps, are equally destitute. But mark the difference. I, the ignorant man, ere three days have passed, will have filled my purse; you, the wise man, will be still as poor. Come, cast away your wisdom, and do as I do.'

"How!'

"Take from the superfluities of others what your necessities crave. My horse, my pistol, a ready hand, a stout heart, these are to me what coffers are to others. There is the chance of detection and of death; I allow it; but is not this chance better than some certainties?'

The tempter with the glorious face and the demon tangs rose again before me—and spoke in the Robber's voice.

"Will you share the danger and the booty?" renewed Houseman, in a low voice.

"Speak out," said I; 'explain your purpose!'

"Houseman's looks brightened.

"Listen!" said he; 'Clarke, despite his present wealth lawfully gained, is about to purloin more; he has converted his legacy into jewels; he has borrowed other jewels on false pretences; he intends to make these also his own, and to leave the town in the dead of night; he has confided to me his purpose, and asked my aid. He and I, be it known to you, were friends of old; we have shared together other dangers and other spoils. Now do you guess my meaning? Let us ease him of his burden! I offer to you the half; share the enterprise and its fruits.'

"I rose, I walked away, I pressed my hands on my heart. Houseman

saw the conflict; he followed me; he named the value of the prize he proposed to gain; that which he called my share placed all my wishes within my reach!—*Leisure, independence, knowledge.* The sublime Discovery—the possession of the glorious Pastel! All, all within my grasp—and by a single deed!—no frauds, no repentance—no sin long contained—a single deed! I breathed heavily—but the weight still lay upon my heart. I shut my eyes and shuddered—the mortal shuddered, but still the demon smiled!

“Give me your hand,” said Houseman.

“No, no,” I said, breaking away from him. “I must pause—I must consider—I do not yet refuse, but I will not now decide.”

Houseman pressed, but I persevered in my determination;—he would have threatened me, but my nature was laughter than his and I smiled him. It was agreed that he should seek me that night and learn my choice—the next night was the one on which the robbery was to be committed. We parted—I returned at dusk to my home. Fate had woven her web around me—a new incident had occurred which strengthened the web—there was a poor girl whom I had been accustomed to see in my walks. She supported her family by her dexterity in making lace—a quiet, patient-looking, gentle creature. Clarke had, a few days since, under pretence of purchasing lace, decoyed her to his house (when she and himself were from home), where he used the most brutal violence towards her. The extreme poverty of the parents had enabled him easily to persuade them to hush up the matter, but something of the story got abroad; the poor girl was marked out for fast grasp and scandal which among the very lowest classes are as coarse in the expression as malignant

in the sentiment; and in the paroxysm of shame and despair, the unfortunate girl had that day destroyed herself. This melancholy event wrung forth from the parents the real story—the event and the story reached my ears in the very hour in which my mind was wavering to and fro. “And it is to such uses,” said the Tempter, “that this man puts his gold!”

Houseman came, punctual to our dark appointment. I gave him my hand in silence. The tragic end of his victim, and the indignation it caused, made Clarke yet more eager to leave the town. He had settled with Houseman that he would abscond that very night, not wait for the next, as at first he had intended. His jewels and property were put in a small compass. He had arranged that he would, towards midnight or later, quit his lodging; and about a mile from the town, Houseman had engaged to have a chaise in readiness. For this service Clarke had promised Houseman a reward, with which the latter appeared contented. It was agreed that I should meet Houseman and Clarke at a certain spot in their way from the town. Houseman appeared at first fearful, lest I should relent and waver in my purpose. It is never so with men whose thoughts are deep and strong. To resolve was the arduous step, once resolved, and I cast not a look behind. Houseman left me for the present. I could not rest in my chamber. I went forth and walked about the town. The night deepened—I saw the lights in each house withdrawn, one by one, and at length all was hushed—Silence and Sleep kept court over the shades of noon. Nature never seemed to me to make so dread a pause.

“The moon came out, but with a pale and sickly countenance. It was winter; the snow, which had been falling towards eve, lay deep upon the ground, and the frost seemed to”

lock the universal nature into the same dread tranquillity which had taken possession of my soul.

"Houseman was to have come to me at midnight, just before Clarke left his house, but it was nearly two hours after that time ere he arrived. I was then walking to and fro before my own door; I saw that he was not alone, but with Clarke. 'Ha!' said he, 'this is fortunate; I see you are just going home. You were engaged, I recollect, at some distance from the town, and have, I suppose, just returned. Will you admit Mr. Clarke and myself for a short time?—for to tell you the truth,' said he, in a lower voice—'the watchman is about, and we must not be seen by him! I have told Clarke that he may trust you,—we are relatives!'

"Clarke, who seemed strangely credulous and indifferent, considering the character of his associate,—but those whom Fate destroys she first blinds,—made the same request in a careless tone, assigning the same cause. Unwillingly, I opened the door and admitted them. We went up to my chamber. Clarke spoke with the utmost unconcern of the fraud he purposed, and with a heartlessness that made my veins boil, of the poor wretch his brutality had destroyed. They stayed for nearly an hour, for the watchman remained some time in that beat—and then Houseman asked me to accompany them a little way out of the town. Clarke seconded the request. We walked forth: the rest—why need I tell?—I cannot—O God, I cannot! Houseman lied in the court. I did not strike the blow—I never designed a murder. Crime enough in a robber's deed! He fell—he grasped my hand, raised not to strike but to shield him! Never more has the right hand cursed by that dying clasp been given in pledge of human faith and friendship. But the deed was done, and

the robber's comrade, in the eyes of man and law, was the murderer's accomplice.

"Houseman divided the booty: my share he buried in the earth, leaving me to withdraw it when I chose. There, perhaps, it lies still. I never touched what I had murdered my own life to gain. His share, by the aid of a gipsy bag with whom he had dealings, Houseman removed to London. And now, mark what poor strugglers we are in the eternal web of destiny! Three days after that deed, a relation who neglected me in life, died, and left me wealth!—wealth at least to me!—Wealth, greater than that for which I had The news fell on me as a thunderbolt. Had I waited but three little days! Just Heaven! when they told me, I thought I heard the devils laugh out at the fool who had boasted wisdom! Had I waited but three days, three little days!—Had but a dream been sent me, had but my heart cried within me,—'Thou hast suffered long, tarry yet!'^{*} No, it

* Aram has hitherto been suffered to tell his own tale without comment or interruption. The chain of reasonings, the metaphysical labyrinth of defence and motive, which he wrought around his guilt, it was, in justice to him, necessary to give at length, in order to throw a clearer light on his character—and lighten, perhaps, in some measure, the colours of his crime. No moral can be more impressive than that which teaches how man can entangle himself in his own sophisms—that moral is better, viewed aright, than volumes of homilies. But here I must pause for one moment, to bid the reader remark, that that event which confirmed Aram in the bewildering doctrines of his pernicious fatalism, ought rather to inculcate the divine virtue—the foundation of all virtues, *Heaven or Christian*—that which Epictetus made clear, and Christ sacred—*FORGIVENESS*. The reader will note, that the answer to the reasonings that probably convinced the mind of Aram, and blinded him to his crime, may be found in the *change of feelings* by which the crime was followed. I must apologise for this interruption—it seemed to me advisable in this place.

was for this, for the guilt and its penance, for the wasted life and the shameful death—with all my thirst for good, my dreams of glory—that I was born, that I was marked from my first sleep in the cradle!

"The disappearance of Clarke of course created great excitement; those whom he had ever reached had naturally an interest in discovering him. Some vague surmises that he might have been made away with were rumoured abroad. Houseman and I, owing to some concurrence of circumstance, were examined,—not that suspicion attached to me before or after the examination. That ceremony ended in nothing. Houseman did not betray himself; and I, who from a boy had mastered my passions, could master also the nerves, by which passions are betrayed—but I read in the face of the woman with whom I lodged that I was suspected. Houseman told me that she had openly expressed her suspicion to him: nay, he entertained some design against her life, which he naturally abandoned on quitting the town. This he did soon afterwards. I did not linger long behind him. I received my legacy, and departed on foot to Scotland. And now I was above want—was I at rest! Not yet. I felt urged on to wander—Chin's curse descends to Cain's children. I travelled for some considerable time,—I saw men and cities, and I opened a new volume in my kind. It was strange; but before the deed, I was as a child in the ways of the world, and a child, despite my knowledge, might have duped me. The moment after it, a light broke upon me—it seemed as if my eyes were touched with a charm, and rendered capable of piercing the hearts of men! Yes, it *was* a charm,—a new charm—it was *Sussex*! I now practised myself in the use of arms,—they made my sole companions. Peaceful as I seemed 'to the world' I felt there was that

eternally within me with which the world was at war.

"And what became of the superb ambition which has undone me! Where vanished that Grand Discovery which was to benefit the world? The ambition died in remorse, and the vessel that should have borne me to the far Land of Science, lay rotting piecemeal on a sea of blood. The Past destroyed my old heritage in the Future. The consciousness that at any hour, in the possession of honours, by the hearth of love, I might be dragged forth and proclaimed a murderer; that I held my life, my reputation, at the breath of accident; that in the moment I least dreamed of, the earth might yield its dead, and the gibbet demand its victim:—this could I feel—all this—and not see a spectre in the place of science!—a spectre that walked by my side, that slept in my bed, that rose from my books, that glided between me and the stars of heaven, that stole along the flowers, and withered their sweet breath; that whispered in my ear, 'Toil, fool, and be wise; the gift of Wisdom is to place us above the reach of fortune, but *thou* art her veriest minion!' Yes; I paused at last from my wanderings, and surrounded myself with books, and knowledge became once more to me what it had been, a thirst; but not what it had been, a reward. I occupied my thoughts, I laid up new hoards; within my mind, I looked around, and I saw few whose stores were like my own—but gone for ever the sublime desire of applying wisdom to the service of mankind! Mankind had grown my foe. I looked upon them with other eyes. I knew that I carried within me that secret which, if bared to day, would make them loathe and hate me,—yes, though I coined my future life into one series of benefits to them and their posterity! Was not this thought enough to quell my ardour?

—to chill activity into rest? The brighter the honours I might win—the greater the services I might bestow on the world, the more dread and fearful might be my fall at last! I might be but piling up the scaffold from which I was to be hurled! Possessed by these thoughts, a new view of human affairs succeeded to my old aspirations:—the moment a man feels that an object has ceased to charm, his reasonings reconcile himself to his loss. "What," said I; "why flatter myself that *I can serve*, that I can enlighten mankind? Are we fully sure that individual wisdom has ever, in reality, done so? Are we really better because Newton lived, and happier because Bacon thought?" These freezing reflections pleased the present state of my mind more than the warm and yearning enthusiasm it had formerly nourished. Mere worldly ambition from a boy I had disdained;—the true worth of sceptres and crowns, the disquietude of power, the humiliations of vanity had never been disguised from my sight. Intellectual ambition had inspired me. I now regarded it equally as a delusion. I coveted light solely for my own soul to bathe in.

"Rest now became to me the sole *to kalon*, the sole charm of existence. I grew enamoured of the doctrine of those old mystics who have placed happiness only in an even and balanced quietude. And where but in utter loneliness was that quietude to be enjoyed? I no longer wondered that men in former times, when consumed by the recollection of some haunting guilt, fled to the desert and became hermits. Tranquillity and solitude are the only soothers of a memory deeply troubled—light griefs fly to the crowd, fierce thoughts must battle themselves to rest. Many years had flown, and I had made my home in many places. All that was turbulent, if not all that was *unquiet*, in my

recollections, had died away. Time had lulled me into a sense of security. I breathed more freely. I sometimes stole from the past. Since I had quitted Knaresbro' chance had often thrown it in my power to serve my brethren—not by wisdom, but by charity, or courage—by individual acts that it soothed me to remember. If the grand aim of enlightening a world was gone, if to so enlarged a benevolence had succeeded apathy or despair, still the man, the human man, clung to my heart; still was I as prone to pity, as prompt to defend, as glad to cheer, whenever the vicissitudes of life afforded me the occasion, and to poverty, most of all, my hand never closed. For oh! what a terrible devil creeps into that man's soul who sees famine at his door! One tender act and how many black desires, struggling into life within you may crush for ever! He who deems the world his foe,—convince *him* that he has one friend, and it is like snatching a dagger from his hand!

"I came to a beautiful and remote part of the country. Walter Lester, I came to Grassdale!—the enchanting scenery around, the sequestered and deep retirement of the place, arrested me at once. "And among these valleys," I said, "will I linger out the rest of my life, and among these quiet graves shall mine be dug, and my secret shall die with me!"

"I rented the lonely house in which I dwelt when you first knew me, thither I transported my books and instruments of science, and a deep quiet, almost amounting to content, fell like a sweet sleep upon my soul!"

"In this state of mind, the most free from memory that I had known for twelve years, I first saw Madeline Lester. Even with that first time a sudden and heavenly light seemed to dawn upon me. Her face—its still, its serene, its touching beauty—shone down on my desolation like a dream

of mercy—like a hope of pardon. My heart warmed as I beheld it, my pulse woke from its own slowness. I was young once more. Young! the youth, the freshness, the ardour—not of the frame only, but of the soul. But I then only saw, or spoke to her—scarce knew her—not loved her—nor was it often, that we met. The south wind stirred the dark waters of my mind, but it passed, and all became hushed again. It was not for two years from the time we first saw each other, that accident brought us closely together. I pass over the rest. We loved! Yet, oh what struggles were mine during the progress of that love! How unnatural did it seem to me to yield to a passion that united me with my kind, and as I loved her more, how far more torturing grew my fear of the future! That which had almost slept before awoke again to terrible life. The veil that covered the past might be rent, the dead awake, and that ghastly chain separate me for ever from her! What a doom, too, might I bring upon that breast which had begun so confidently to love me! Often—often I resolved to fly—to forsake her—to seek some desert spot in the distant parts of the world, and never to be betrayed again into human emotions! But as the bird flutters in the net, as the hare shrinks from its pursuers, I did but scruple, I did but trifle, with an irresistible doom. Mark how strange are the schemes of Fate—Fate that gives us warnings, and takes away the power to obey them—the wise prophecies, the juggling fiend! On the same evening that brought me acquainted with Madeline Lester, Houseman, led by schemes of fraud and violence into that part of the country, discovered and sought me! Imagine my feelings, when, in the hours of night I opened the door of my lonely home to his summons, and by the light of that moon which had witnessed so never-to-be-forgotten a

companionship between us, beheld my accomplice in murder after the lapse of so many years. Time and a course of vice had changed, and hardened, and lowered his nature: and in the power,—at the will—of that nature, I beheld myself abruptly placed. He passed that night under my roof. He was poor. I gave him what was in my hands. He promised to leave that part of England—to seek me no more.

“The next day I could not bear my own thoughts, the revulsion was too sudden, too full of turbulent, fierce, torturing emotions; I fled for a short relief to the house to which Madeline’s father had invited me. But in vain I sought, by wine, by converse, by human voices, human kindness, to fly the ghost that had been raised from the grave of time. I soon returned to my own thoughts. I resolved to wrap myself once more in the solitude of my heart. But let me not repeat what I have said before, somewhat prematurely, in my narrative. I resolved—I struggled in vain: Fate had ordained that the sweet life of Madeline Lester should wither beneath the poison tree of mine. Houseman sought me again; and now came on the humiliating part of crime, its low calculations, its poor defence, its paltry trickery, its mean hypocrisy! They made my chiefest penance! I was to evade, to beguile, to buy into silence, this rude and despoiled ruffian. No matter now to repeat how this task was fulfilled: I surrendered nearly my all on the condition of his leaving England for ever: not till I thought that condition already fulfilled, all the day had passed on which he should have left England, did I consent to allow Madeline’s fate to be irrevocably woven with mine.

“How often, when the soul stings, are her leftmost feelings punished through her lowest! To no, lone, rant, for ever on the wing to unearthly

speculation, galling and humbling was it, indeed, to be suddenly called from the enurance of thought, to barter, in pounds and pence for life, and with one like Houseman! These are the curses that deepen the tragedy of life, by grinding down our pride. But I wander back to what I have before said. I was to marry Madeline,—I was once more poor, but want did not rise before me; I had succeeded in obtaining the promise of a competence from one whom you know. For that which I had once sought to force from my kind, I asked now, not with the spirit of the beggar, but of the just claimant, and in that spirit it was granted. And now I was really happy; Houseman I believed removed for ever from my path; Madeline was about to be mine; I surrendered myself to love, and, blind and deluded, I wandered on, and awoke on the brink of that precipice into which I am about to plunge. You know the rest. But oh! what now was my horror! It had not been a mere worthless, isolated unit in creation that I had seen blotted out of the sum of life.—The murder done in my presence, and of which Law would deem me the accomplice, had been done upon the brother of him whose child was my betrothed! Mysterious avenger—relentless Fate! How, when I deemed myself the farthest from her, had I been sinking into her grasp! How incalculable—how measureless—how viewless the consequences of one crime, even when we think we have weighed them all with scales that would have turned with a hair's weight! Hear me—as the voice of a man who is on the brink of a world, the awful nature of which reason cannot pierce—hear me! when your heart tempts to some wandering from the line allotted to the rest of men, and whispers, 'This may be crime in others, but is not so in thee; or, it is but one misdeed, it shall entail no other,'—tremble; cling fast, fast to

the path you are lured to leave. Remember me!

"But in this state of mind I was yet forced to play the hypocrite. Had I been alone in the world—Had Madeline and Lester not been to me what they were, I might have disproved the charge of fellowship in murder—I might have wrung from the pale lips of Houseman the actual truth—but though I might clear myself as the murderer, I must condemn myself as the robber—and in avowal of that lesser guilt, though I might have lessened the abhorrence of others, I should have inflicted a blow, worse than that of my death itself, on the hearts of those who deemed me sinless as themselves. *Their* eyes were on me; *their* lives were set on my complete acquittal, less even of life than honour;—my struggle against truth was less for myself than them. My defence fulfilled its end: Madeline died without distrusting the innocence of him she loved. Lester, unless you betray me, will die in the same belief. In truth, since the arts of hypocrisy have been commenced, the pride of consistency would have made it sweet to me to leave the world in a like error, or at least in doubt. For you I conquer that desire, the proud man's last frailty. And now my tale is done. From what passes at this instant within my heart, I lift not the veil! Whether beneath be despair, or hope, or fiery emotions, or one settled and ominous calm, matters not. My last hours shall not belie my life: on the verge of death I will not play the dastard, and tremble at the Dim Unknown. Perhaps I am not without hope that the Great and Unseen Spirit, whose emanation within me I have nursed and worshipped, though erringly and in vain, may see in his fallen creature one bewildered by his reason rather than yielding to his vices. The guide I received from heaven betrayed me, and I was lost;

but I have not plunged wittingly from crime to crime. Against one guilty deed, some good, and much suffering, may be set; and dim and afar off from my allotted hour, I may behold in her glorious home the face of her who taught me to love, and who, even there, could scarce be blessed without shedding the light of her divine forgiveness upon me. Enough! ere you break this seal, my doom rests not with man nor earth. The burning desires I have known—the resplendent visions I have nursed—the sublime aspirations that have lifted me so often from sense and clay,—these tell me, that, whether for good or ill, I am the thing of an Immortality, and the creature of a God! As men of the old wisdom drew their garments around their face, and sat down collectedly to die, I wrap myself in the settled resignation of a soul firm to the last, and taking not from man's vengeance even the method of its dismissal. The courses of my life I swayed with my own hand; from my own hand shall come the manner and moment of my death!

“EUGENE ARAM.

“August, 1796.”

On the day after that evening in which Aram had given the above confession to Walter Lester—on the day of execution, when they entered the condemned cell, they found the prisoner lying on the bed; and when they

approached to take off the irons, they found that he neither stirred nor answered to their call. They attempted to raise him, and he then uttered some words in a faint voice. They perceived that he was covered with blood. He had opened his veins in two places in the arm with a sharp instrument which he had contrived to conceal. A surgeon was instantly sent for, and by the customary applications the prisoner in some measure was brought to himself. Resolved not to defraud the law of its victim, they bore him, though he appeared unconscious of all around, to the fatal spot. But when he arrived at that dread place, his sense suddenly seemed to return. He looked hastily round the throng that swayed and murmured below, and a faint flush rose to his cheek: he cast his eyes impatiently above, and breathed hard and convulsively. The dire preparations were made, completed; but the prisoner drew back for an instant,—was it from mortal fear? He motioned to the clergyman to approach, as if about to whisper some last request in his ear. The clergyman bowed his head,—there was a minute's awful pause.—Aram seemed to straggle as for words, when, suddenly throwing himself back, a bright triumphant smile flashed over his whole face. With that smile the haughty spirit passed away, and the law's last indignity was wreaked upon a breathless corpse!

CHAPTER VIII. AND LAST.

THE TRAVELLER'S RETURN.—THE COUNTRY VILLAGE ONCE MORE VISITED.—ITS INHABITANTS.—THE REMEMBERED BROOK.—THE DESERTED MANOR-HOUSE.—THE CHURCHYARD.—THE TRAVELLER RESUMES HIS JOURNEY.—THE COUNTRY TOWN.—A MEETING OF TWO LOVERS AFTER LONG ABSENCE AND MUCH SORROW.—CONCLUSION.

"The lopped tree in time may grow again,
Most naked plants renew both fruit and flower;
The sorriest wight may find release from pain,
The driest soil suck in some moistening shower:
Time goes by turns, and chances change by course
From foul to fair."—ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SOMETIMES, towards the end of a gloomy day, the sun, before but dimly visible, breaks suddenly out, and where before you had noticed only the sterner outline of the mountains, you turn with relief to the lowlier features of the vale. So in this record of crime and sorrow, the ray that breaks forth at the close, brings into gentle light the shapes which the earlier darkness had obscured.

It was some years after the date of the last event we have recorded, and it was a fine warm noon in the happy month of May, when a horseman rode slowly through the long, straggling village of Grassdale. He was a man, though in the prime of youth (for he might yet want some two years of thirty), who bore the steady and earnest air of one who has wrestled the world; his eye keen but tranquil; his countenance though handsome features, which thought, or care, had despoiled of the roundness of their early contour, leaving the cheek somewhat sunken, and the lines somewhat marked, were characterised by a grave, and at that moment by a melancholy and soft expression; and now, as his horse proceeded slowly through the green lane, which at every vista gave glimpses of rich

verdant valleys, the sparkling river, or the orchard ripe with the fragrant blossoms of spring, his head drooped upon his breast, and the tears started to his eyes. The dress of the horseman was of foreign fashion, and at that day, when the garb still denoted the calling sufficiently military to show the profession he had belonged to. And well did the garb become the short dark moustache, the sinewy chest, and length of limb, of the young horseman: recommendations, the two latter, not despised in the court of the great Frederic of Prussia, in whose service he had borne arms. He had commenced his career in that battle terminating in the signal defeat of the bold Daun, when the fortunes of that gallant general paled at last before the star of the greatest of modern kings. The peace of 1763 had left Prussia in the quiet enjoyment of the glory she had obtained, and the young Englishman took the advantage it afforded him of seeing, as a traveller, not despoiler, the rest of Europe.

The adventure and the excitement of travel pleased, and left him even now uncertain whether or not his present return to England would be for long. He had not been a week re-

turned, and to this part of his native country he had hastened at once.

He checked his horse as he now passed the memorable sign that yet swung before the door of Peter Deatry; and there, under the shade of the broad tree, now budding into all its tenderest verdure, a pedestrian wayfarer sat enjoying the rest and coolness of his shelter. Our horseman cast a look at the open door, across which, in the bustle of housewifery, female forms now and then glanced and vanished, and presently he saw Peter himself saunter forth to chat with the traveller beneath his tree. And Peter Deatry was the same as ever, only he seemed perhaps shorter and thinner than of old, as if Time did not so much break as gradually wear away mine host's slender person.

The horseman gazed for a moment, but observing Peter return the gaze, he turned aside his head, and, putting his horse into a canter, soon passed out of cognisance of The Spotted Dog.

He now came in sight of the neat white cottage of the old corporal, and there, leaning over the pale, a crutch under one arm, and his friendly pipe in one corner of his shaven mouth, was the corporal himself. Perched upon the railing in a semi-doze, the ears down, the eyes closed, sat a large brown cat: poor Jaelona, it was not thyself! death spares neither cat nor king; but thy virtues lived in thy grandchild; and thy grandchild (as age brings dotage) was loved even more than thou by the worthy corporal. Long may thy race flourish! for at this day it is not extinct. Nature rarely inflicts barrenness on the feline tribe; they are essentially made for love, and love's soft cares; and a cat's lineage outlives the lineage of kings!

At the sound of hoofs, the corporal turned his head, and he looked long and wistfully at the horseman, as, re-

laxing his horse's pace into a walk, our traveller rode slowly on.

"Fore George," muttered the corporal, "a fine man—a very fine man 'bout my inches—ugh!"

A smile, but a very faint smile, crossed the lip of the horseman, as he gazed on the figure of the stalwart corporal.

"He eyes me hard," thought he; "yet he does not seem to remember me. I must be greatly changed. 'Tis fortunate, however, that I am not recognised: fain, indeed, at this time, would I come and go unnoticed and alone."

The horseman fell into a reverie, which was broken by the murmur of the sunny rivulet, fretting over each little obstacle it met,—the happy and spoiled child of Nature! That murmur rang on the horseman's ear like a voice from his boyhood; how familiar was it, how dear! No haunting tone of music ever recalled so rushing a host of memories and associations, as that simple, restless, everlasting sound! Everlasting!—all had changed,—the trees had sprung up or decayed—some cottages around were ruins,—some new and unfamiliar ones supplied their place; and on the stranger himself—on all those whom the sound recalled to his heart—Time had been, indeed, at work; but, with the same exulting bound and happy voice, that little brook leaped along its way. Ages hence, may the course be as glad, and the murmur as full of mirth! They are blessed things, those remote and unchanging streams—they fill us with the same love as if they were living creatures;—and in a green corner of the world there is one, that, for my part, I never see without forgetting myself to tears—tears that I would not lose for a king's ransom, tears that no other sight or sound could call from their source, tears of what affliction what soft regret; tears

through the soft mists of which I behold what I have lost on earth and hope to regain in heaven!

The traveller, after a brief pause, continued his road; and now he came full upon the old manor house. The weeds were grown up in the garden, the mossed paling was broken in many places, the house itself was shut up, and the sun glanced on the deep-sunk casements, without finding its way into the desolate interior. High above the old hospitable gate hung a board, announcing that the house was for sale, and referring the curious or the speculating to the attorney of the neighbouring town. The horseman sighed heavily, and muttered to himself; then, turning up the road that led to the back entrance, he came into the court yard, and, leading his horse into an empty stable, he proceeded on foot through the dismantled premises, pausing with every moment, and holding a sad and ever-changing commune with himself. An old woman, a stranger to him, was the sole inmate of the house; and, imagining he came to buy, or, at least, examine, she conducted him through the house, pointing out its advantages, and lamenting its dilapidated state. Our traveller scarcely heard her; but when he came to one room, which he would not enter till the last (it was the little parlour in which the once happy family had been wont to sit), he sank down in the chair that had been Lester's honoured seat, and, covering his face with his hands, did not move or look up for several moments. The old woman gazed at him with surprise.—"Perhaps, sir, you knew the family!—they were greatly beloved."

The traveller did not answer; but when he rose, he muttered to himself,—"No; the experiment is made in vain! Never, never could I live here again—it must be so—the house of my forefathers must pass into a stranger's hands." With this reflec-

tion he hurried from the house, and, re-entering the garden, turned through a little gate that swung half open on its shattered hinges, and led into the green and quiet sanctuaries of the dead. The same touching character of deep and undisturbed repose that hallows the country churchyard,—and that one more than most,—yet brooded there, as when, years ago, it woke his young mind to reflection, then unmingled with regret.

He passed over the rude mounds of earth that covered the deceased poor, and paused at a tomb of higher, though but of simple pretensions; it was not yet discoloured by the dews and seasons, and the short inscription traced upon it was strikingly legible in comparison with those around:—

HOWLAND LESTER,

Obit 1769, æt. 64.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

By that tomb the traveller remained in undisturbed contemplation for some time; and when he turned, all the swarthy colour had died from his cheek, his eyes were dim, and the wonted pride of a young man's step and a soldier's bearing was gone from his mien.

As he looked up, his eye caught afar, embedded among the soft verdure of the spring, one lone and grey house, from whose chimney there rose no smoke—sad, inhospitable, dismantled as that beside which he now stood;—as if the curse which had fallen on the inmates of either mansion still clung to either roof. One hasty glance only, the traveller gave to the solitary and distant abode,—and then started and quickened his pace.

On re-entering the stables, the traveller found the corporal examining his horse from head to foot with great care and attention.

"Good hoofs too, humph!" quoth

the corporal, as he released the front leg; and, turning round, saw, with some little confusion, the owner of the steed he had been hankering with so minute a survey. "Oh,—augh! looking at the beastie, sir, lest it might have a cast shoe. Thought your honour might want some intelligent person to show you the premises, if so be you have come to buy; nothing but an old woman there, dare say your honour does not like old 'omen—augh!"

"The owner is not in these parts!" said the horseman.

"No, over seas, sir; a fine young gentleman, but hasty; and—and—but Lord bless me! sure—no, it can't be—yes, now you turn—it is—it is my young master!" So saying, the corporal, roused into affection, hobbled up to the wanderer, and seized and kissed his hand. "Ah, sir, we shall be glad, indeed, to see you back after such doings. But 's all forgotten now, and gone by—augh! Poor Miss Ellinor, how happy she'll be to see your honour. Ah! how she be changed, surely!"

"Changed? ay, I make no doubt! What! does she look in weak health?"

"No; as to that, your honour, she be winsome enough still," quoth the corporal, smacking his lips; "I seed her the week afore last, when I went over to — for I suppose you knows as she lives there, all alone like in a small house, with a green rail afore it, and a brass knocker on the door at top of the town, with a fine view of the — hills in front! Well, sir, I seed her, and mighty handsome she looked, though a little thinner than she was; but, for all that, she be greatly changed."

"How! for the worse?"

"For the worse, indeed," answered the corporal, assuming an air of melancholy and grave significance; "she be grown so religious, sir, think of that—augh—bothor whaugh!"

"Is that all!" said Walter, relieved, and with a slight smile. And she lives alone!"

"Quite, poor young lady, as if she had made up her mind to be an old maid; though I know as how she refused Square Knyvett of the Grange;—waiting for your honour's return, mayhap!"

"Lead out the horse, Bunting; but stay, I am sorry to see you with a crutch; what 's the cause? no accident, I trust!"

"Merely rheumatics—will attack the youngest of us; never been quite myself since I went a travelling with your honour—augh!—without going to Lunnun arter all. But I shall be stronger next year, I dare to say!"

"I hope you will, Bunting. And Miss Lester lives alone, you say?"

"Ay; and for all she be so religious, the poor about do bless her very footsteps. She does a power of good; she gave *me* half-a-guinea last Tuesday fortnight; an excellent young lady, so sensible like!"

"Thank you; I can tighten the girths!—so!—there, Bunting—there's something for old companion-ship's sake."

"Thank your honour; you be too good, always was—baugh! But I hopes your honour be a coming to live here now; 'twill make things smile again!"

"No, Bunting, I fear not," said Walter, spurring through the gates of the yard—"Good day!"

"Augh, then," cried the corporal, hobbling breathlessly after him, "if so be as I sha'n't see your honour agin, at which I am extremely concerned, will your honour recollect your promise, touching the 'tate ground? The steward, Master Bailey, 'od rot him! has clean forget it—augh!"

"The same old man, Bunting, eh! Well, make your mind easy, it shall be done."

"Lord bless your honour's good

heart ; thank ye ; and - and " laying his hand on the bridle—" your honour *did* say the bit cot should be rent free ! You see, your honour," quoth the corporal, drawing up with a grave smile, " I may marry some day or other, and have a large family ; and the rent won't sit so easy then - augh ! "

" Let go the rein, Bunting - and consider your house rent-free. "

" And your honour - and - - - "

But Walter was already in a brisk trot ; and the remaining petitions of the corporal died in empty air.

" A good day's work, too," muttered Jacob, hobbling homeward. " What a green un 'tis, still ! Never be a man of the world - augh ! "

For two hours Walter did not relax the rapidity of his pace ; and when he did so at the descent of a steep hill, a small country town lay before him, the sun glittering on its single spire, and lighting up the long, clean, centre street, with the good old-fashioned garden stretching behind each house, and detached cottages around, peeping forth here and there from the blossoms and verdure of the young May. He rode into the yard of the principal inn, and putting up his horse, inquired, in a tone that he persuaded himself was the tone of indifference, for Miss Lester's house.

" John," said the landlady (landlord there was none), summoning a little boy of about ten years old - " run on " and show this gentleman the good lady's house : and - stay - his honour will excuse you a moment - just take up the nosegay you cut for her this morning : she loves flowers. Ah ! sir, an excellent young lady is Miss Lester," continued the hostess, as the boy ran back for the nosegay ; " so charitable, so kind, so meek to all. Adversity, they say, softens some characters ; but she must always have been good. Well, God bless her ! and that every one must say. My boy John, sir, - he is not eleven yet, come next August -

a 'cute boy, calls her the good lady. we now always call her so here. Come, John, that's right. You stay to dine here, sir ? Shall I put down a chicken ? "

At the farther extremity of the town stood Miss Lester's dwelling. It was the house which her father had spent his last days ; and there she had continued to reside, when left by his death to a small competence, which Walter, then abroad, had persuaded her (for her pride was of the right kind) to suffer him, though but slightly, to increase. It was a detached and small building, standing a little from the road ; and Walter paused for some moments at the garden-gate, and gazed round him before he followed his young guide, who, tripping lightly up the gravel-walk to the door, rang the bell, and inquired if Miss Lester was within !

Walter was left for some moments alone in a little parlour : he required those moments to recover himself from the past that rushed sweepingly over him. And was it - yes, it was Ellinor that now stood before him ! - Changed she was, indeed ; the slight girl had budded into woman ; changed she was, indeed ; the bound had for ever left that step, once so elastic with hope ; the vivacity of the quick, dark eye was soft and quiet ; the rich colour had given place to a hue fainter, though not less lovely. But to repeat in verse what is poorly bodied forth in prose -

" And years had past, and thus they met again ;

The wind had swept along the flower since then :

O'er her fair cheek a paler lustre spread,

As if the white rose triumph'd o'er the red.

No more she walk'd exulting on the air ;

Light though her step, there was a languor there :

No more - her spirit bursting from its bound, -

She stood, like Hebe, scattering smiles around."

" Ellinor ! " said Walter, mournfully, " thank God ! we meet at last."

"That voice—that face—my cousin—my dear, dear Walter!"

All *resistance*, all consciousness, fled in the delight of that moment; and Ellinor leaned her head upon his shoulder, and scarcely felt the kiss that he pressed upon her lips.

"And so long absent!" said Ellinor, reproachfully.

"But did you not tell me that the blow that had fallen on our house had stricken from you all thoughts of love—had divided us for ever? And what, Ellinor, was England or home without you?"

"Ah!" said Ellinor, recovering herself, and a deep paleness succeeding to the warm and delighted flush, that had been conjured to her cheek, "do not revive the past, I have sought for years—long, solitary, desolate years—to escape from its dark recollections!"

"You speak wisely, dearest Ellinor; let us assist each other in doing so. We are alone in the world—let us unite our lots. Never, through all I have seen and felt,—in the starry night watch of camps—in the blaze of courts—by the sunny groves of Italy—in the deep forests of the Hartz—never have I forgotten you, my sweet and dear cousin. Your image has linked itself indissolubly with all I conceived of home and happiness, and a tranquil and peaceful future; and now I return, and see you, and find you changed, but oh, how lovely! Ah, let us not part again! A confederate, a guide, a mother, father, brother, husband,—all this my heart whispers I could be to you!"

Ellinor turned away her face, but her heart was very full. The solitary years that had passed over her since they last met, rose up before her. The only living image that had mingled through those years with the dreams of the departed, was his who now knelt at her feet,—her sole friend—her sole relative—her first—her last

love! Of all the world, he was the only one with whom she could recur to the past; on whom she might repose her bruised, but still unconquered affections. And Walter knew by that blush—that sigh—that tear, that he was remembered—that he was beloved—that his cousin was his own at last!

"But before you end," said my friend, to whom I showed the above pages, originally concluding my tale with the last sentence, "you must, it is a comfortable and orthodox old fashion,—tell us a little about the fate of the other persons to whom you have introduced us:—the wretch Houseman!"

"True; in the mysterious course of mortal affairs, the greater villain had escaped, the more generous fallen. But though Houseman died without violence—died in his bed, as honest men die—we can scarcely believe that his life was not punishment enough. He lived in strict seclusion—the seclusion of poverty, and maintained himself by dressing flax. His life was several times attempted by the mob, for he was an object of universal execration and horror; and even ten years afterwards, when he died, his body was buried in secret at the dead of night, for the hatred of the world survived him!"

"And the corporal, did he marry in his old age?"

"History telleth of one Jacob Bunting, whose wife, several years younger than himself, played him certain sorry pranks with a rakish squire in the neighbourhood: the said Jacob knowing nothing thereof, but furnishing great oblation unto his neighbours by boasting that he turned an excellent penny by selling poultry to his honour above market prices,—'For Bessy, my girl, I'm a man of the world—ugh!'"

"Contented! a suitable fate for the corporal—But Peter Dealtry!"

"Peter Dealtry know we nothing

more, save that we have seen at Grassdale churchyard a small tombstone inscribed to his memory, with the following sacred posy thereto appended :—

“We flourish, saith the holy text,
One hour, and are cut down the next:
I was like grass but yesterday,
But death has mowed me into hay.”

“And his namesake, Sir Peter Grindlescrew Hales !”

“Went through a long life, honoured and respected, but met with domestic misfortunes in old age. His eldest son married a servant maid, and his youngest daughter——”

“Eloped with the groom !”

“By no means: with a young spendthrift—the very picture of what Sir Peter was in his youth. They were both struck out of their father’s will, and Sir Peter died in the arms of his eight remaining children, seven of whom never forgave his memory for not being the eighth, viz. chief heir.”

“And his contemporary, John Courtland, the non-hypochondriac !”

“Died of sudden suffocation, as he was crossing Hounslow Heath.”

“But Lord ***** !”

“Lived to a great age; his last days, owing to growing infirmities, were spent out of the world; every one pitied him,—it was the happiest time of his life !”

“Dame Darkmans !”

“Was found dead in her bed; from over-fatigue, it was supposed, in making merry at the funeral of a young girl on the previous day.”

“Well !—hem,—and so Walter and his cousin were really married ! And did they never return to the old manor house ?”

“No; the memory that is allied only to melancholy grows sweet with years, and hallows the spot which it haunts; not so the memory allied to dread, terror, and something too of shame. Walter sold the property with

some pang of natural regret; after his marriage with Ellinor he returned abroad for some time, but finally settling in England, engaged in active life, and left to his posterity a name they still honour; and to his country, the memory of some services that will not lightly pass away.

“But one dread and gloomy remembrance never forsook his mind, and exercised the most powerful influence over the actions and motives of his life. In every emergency, in every temptation, there rose to his eyes the fate of him so gifted, so noble in much, so formed for greatness in all things, blasted by one crime—a crime, the offspring of bewildered reasonings—all the while speculating upon virtue. And that fate, revealing the darker secrets of our kind, in which the true science of morals is chiefly found, taught him the twofold lesson,—caution for himself, and charity for others. He knew henceforth that even the criminal is not all evil; the angel within us is not easily expelled; it survives sin, ay, and many sins, and leaves us sometimes in amaze and marvel at the good that lingers round the heart even of the hardest offender.

“And Ellinor clung with more than revived affection to one with whose lot she was now allied. Walter was her last tie upon earth, and in him she learned, day by day, more lavishly to treasure up her heart. Adversity and trial had ennobled the character of both; and she who had so long seen in her cousin all she could love, beheld now in her husband—all that she could venerate and admire. A certain religious fervour, in which, after the calamities of her family, she had indulged, continued with her to the last; but (softened by human ties, and the reciprocation of earthly duties and affections), it was fortunately preserved either from the undue enthusiasm or the undue austerity into which it would otherwise, in

all like-kind have merged. What remained, however, uniting her most cheerful thoughts with something serious, and the happiest moments of the present with the dim and solemn forecast of the future, elevated her nature, not depressed, and made itself visible rather in tender than in sombre hues. And it was sweet, when the thought of Madeline and her father came across her, to recur at once for consolation to that heaven in which she believed their tears were dried, and their past sorrows but a forgotten dream! There is, indeed, a time of life when these reflections make our chief, though a melancholy, pleasure. As we grow older, and sometimes a hope, sometimes a friend, vanishes from our path, the thought of an immortality will press itself forcibly upon us; and there, by little and little, as the ant piles grain after grain, the garners of a future sustenance, we learn to carry our hopes, and harvest, as it were, our wishes.

"Our cousins, then, were happy.

Happy, for they loved one another entirely; and on those who do so love, I sometimes think that, barring physical pain and extreme poverty, the ills of life fall with but idle malice. Yes, they were happy, in spite of the past and in defiance of the future."

"I am satisfied, then," said my friend,—"and your tale is fairly done!"

And now, reader, farewell! If sometimes, as thou hast gone with me to this our parting spot, thou hast suffered thy companion to win the mastery over thine interest, to flash now on thy convictions, to touch now thy heart, to guide thy hope, to excite thy terror, to gain, it may be, to the sources of thy tears—then is there a tie between thee and me which cannot readily be broken! And when thou hearest the malice that wrongs affect the candour which should judge, shall he not find in thy sympathies the defence, or in thy charity the indulgence,—of a friend!

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the preface to this Novel it was stated that the original intention of its Author was to compose, upon the facts of Aram's gloomy history, a tragedy instead of a romance. It may now be not altogether without interest for the reader, if I submit to his indulgence the rough outline of the earlier scenes in the fragment of a drama, which, in all probability, will never be finished. So far as I have gone, the construction of the tragedy differs, in some respects, materially from that of the tale, although the whole of what is now presented to the reader must be considered merely as a copy from the first hasty sketch of an uncompleted design.

November, 1832.

EUGENE ARAM,

A Tragedy.

ACT I. SCENE I.

*Aram's Apartment—Books, Maps, and Scientific Instruments scattered around.
In every thing else the appearance of the greatest poverty.*

1st Creditor (behind the scenes).—I must be paid. Three moons have flitted since

You pledged your word to me.

2d Cred.

And me!

3d Cred.

And me!

Aram (entering). Away, I tell ye! Will ye rend my garb!

Away! to-morrow.—*Gentle sirs, to-morrow.*

1st Cred. This is your constant word.

2d Cred.

We 'll wait no more.

Aram. Ye 'll wait no more! Enough! be seated, sirs

Pray ye, be seated. Well! with searching eyes

Ye do survey these walls! Contain they aught—

Nay, take your leisure—to annul your claims!

(Turning to 1st Cred.) See, sir, yon book—they're yours, if you but tear

That fragment of spoiled paper—no not backward,

I give them with good will. This one is Greek;

A golden work—sweet sir—a golden work;

It teaches us to bear—what I have borne!—

And to forbear men's ills, as you have done.

1st Cred. You mock me. Well—

Aram.

Mock! mock! Alas! my friend,

Do rage indulge in jesting! Pish, sir, pish!

(Turning to 2d Cred.) You will not wrong me so! On your receipt!

Take this round orb ; it miniatures the world,—
And in its study I forgot the world !

Take this, yon table ; —a poor scholar's fare
Needs no such proud support ;—yon bed, too ! (Sleep

Is Night's sweet angel, leading fallen Man
Thro' yielding airs to Youth's lost paradise ;
But Sleep and I have quarrell'd)—take it, sir !

2d Cred. (muttering to the others). Come, we must leave him to the law,
or famine.

You see his goods were costly at a groat !

1st Cred. Well, henceforth I will grow more wise ! 'Tis said
Learning is better than a house or lands.
Let me be modest ! Learning shall go free ;
Give me security in house and lands.

*3rd Cred. (lingering after the other two depart, offers a piece of money to
Aram).* There, man ; I came to menace you with law
And gaols. You're poorer than I thought you !—there——

Aram (looking at the money). What ! and a beggar, too ! 'Tis mighty
well.

Good sir, I'm grateful—I will not refuse you ;
'Twill win back Plato from the crabbed hands
Of him who lends on all things. Thank you, sir ;
Plato and I will thank you.

3d Cred. Crazyd, poor scholar !
I'll take my little one from school this day !

SCENE II.

Aram. Rogues thrive in ease ; and fools grow rich with toll ;
Wealth's wanton eye on Wisdom coldly dwells,
And turns to dote upon the green youth, Folly—
O life, vile life, with what soul-butch love
We cling to thee—when all thy charms are fled—
Yea, the more foul thy withering aspect grows
The steadier burns our passion to possess thee.
To die : ay, there's the cure—the plashing stream
That girds these walls—the drug of the dank weeds
That rot the air below ; these hoard the balm
For broken, pining, and indignant hearts.
But the witch Hope forbids me to be wise ;
And, when I turn to these, Woe's only friends—
And with their weird and eloquent voices, soothe

[Pointing to his books.]

The lulled Babel of the world within,
 I can but dream that my vex'd years at last
 Shall find the quiet of a hermit's cell,
 And far from men's rude malice or low scorn,
 Beneath the loved gaze of the lambent stars;
 And with the hollow rocks, and sparry caves,
 And mystic waves, and music murmuring winds—
 My oracles and co-mates—watch my life
 Glide down the stream of knowledge, and behold
 Its waters with a musing stillness glass
 The smiles of Nature and the eyes of Heaven!

SCENE III.

Enter BOTTLER, slowly watching him • as he remains silent and in thought, BOTTLER touches him on the shoulder.

Boteler. How now! what! gloomy! and the day so bright!
 Why, the old dog that guards the court below
 Hath crept from out his wooden den, and shakes
 His grey hide in the fresh and merry air;
 Tuning his sullen and suspicious bark
 Into a whine of welcome as I pass'd.
 Come, rouse thee, Aram; let us forth.

Aram.

Nay, friend,

My spirit lackeys not the moody skies,
 Nor changes—bright or darkling—with their change.
 Farewell, good neighbour; I must work this day;—
 Behold my tools—and scholars toil alone!

Boteler. Tush! a few minutes wasted upon me
 May well be spared from this long summer day.
 Hast heard the news! Monson!—thou know'st the man!

Aram. I do remember. *He was poor.* I knew him.

Boteler. But he is poor no more. The all-changing wheel
 Roll'd round, and scatter'd riches on his hearth.
 A distant kinsman, while he lived, a tiggard,
 Generous in death hath left his grateful heir
 In our good neighbour. Why, you seem not glad;
 Does it not please you?

Aram.

Yea.

Boteler.

And so it should;

'Tis a poor fool, but honest. Had dame Fate

Done this for you—for me ;—'tis true our brains
Had taught us better how to spend the dross ;
But earth hath worse men than our neighbour.

Aram.

Ay,

“Worse men !” it may be so !

Boteler.

Would I were rich !

What loyal service, what complacent friendship,
What gracious love upon the lips of Beauty,
Bloom into life beneath the beams of gold.
Venus and Bacchus, the bright Care-dispellers,
Are never seen but in the train of Fortune.
Would I were rich !

Aram.

Shame on thy low ambition !

Would I were rich, too ;—but for other aims.
Oh ! what a glorious and time-hallow'd world
Would I invoke around me : and wall in
A haunted solitude with those bright souls,
That, with a still and warning aspect, gaze
Upon us from the hallowing shroud of books !
By Heaven, there should not be a seer who left
The world one doctrine, but I'd task his lore,
And commune with his spirit ! All the truths
Of all the tongues of earth—I'd have them *all*,
Had I the golden spell to raise their ghosts !
I'd build me domes, too ; from whose giddy height
My soul would watch the night stars, and unsphere
The destinies of man, or track the ways
Of God from world to world ; pursue the winds,
The clouds that womb the thunder—to their home ;
Invoke and conquer Nature—share her throne
On earth, and ocean, and the chainless air ;
And on the Titan fabrics of old truths
Raise the bold spirit to a height with heaven !
Would—would my life might boast one year of wealth
Though death should bound it !

Boteler.

Thou may'st have thy wish !

Aram (rapt, and abstractedly). Who spoke ? Methought I heard my
genius say—

My evil genius—“Thou may'st have thy wish !”

Boteler. Thou heard'st aright ! Monsoon this eve will pass

By Nid's swift wave ; he bears his gold with him ;
The spot is lone—untenanted—remote ;
And, if thou hast but courage,—one bold deed,
And one short moment—thou art poor no more !

Aram (after a pause, turning his eyes slowly on *Boteler*). *Boteler*, was that thy voice?

Boteler. How couldst thou doubt it!

Aram. Methought its tone seem'd changed; and now methinks,
Now, that I look upon thy face, my eyes
Discover not its old familiar aspect.
Thou'rt very sure thy name is *Boteler*!

Boteler. Pahaw,
Thou'rt dreaming still:—awake, and let thy mind
And heart drink all I breathe into thy ear.
I know thee, *Aram*, for a man humane,
Gentle, and musing; but withal of stuff
That might have made a warrior; and desires,
Though of a subtler nature than my own,
As high, and hard to limit. Care and want
Have made thee what they made thy friend long since.
And when I wound my heart to a resolve,
Dangerous, but fraught with profit, I did fix
On thee as one whom Fate and Nature made
A worthy partner in the nameless deed.

Aram. Go on. I pray thee pause not.

Boteler. There remain
Few words to body forth my full design.
Know that—at my advice—this eve the gull'd
And credulous fool of Fortune quits his home.
Say but one word, and thou shalt share with me
The gold he bears about him.

Aram. At what price?

Boteler. A little courage.

Aram. And my soul!—No more.

I see your project —

Boteler. And embrace it!

Aram. Lo!

How many deathful, dread, and ghastly snares
Encompass him whom the stark hunger gnaws,
And the grim demon Penury shuts from out
The golden Eden of his bright desires!
To-day, I thought to slay myself, and die,
No single hope once won!—and now I hear
Dark words of blood, and quail not, nor recoil.—
'Tis but a death in either case;—or mine
Or that poor dotard's!—And the guilt—the guilt,—
Why, what is guilt!—A word! We are the tools,
From birth to death, of destiny; and shaped,
For sin or virtue, by the iron!

Of the unseen, but unresisted, hands
Of Fate, the august compeller of the world.

*Boteler (aside).—*It works. Behold the devil at all hearts!
I am a soldier, and inured to blood;
But *he* hath lived with moralists forsooth,
And yet one word to tempt him, and one sting
Of the food-craving clay, and the meek sage
Graaps at the crime he shuddered at before.

Aram (abruptly). Thou hast broke thy fast this morning

Boteler. Ay, in truth.

Aram. But *I* have not since yesternorn, and ask'd
In the belief that certain thoughts unwont
To blacken the still mirror of my mind
Might be the phantoms of the sickening flesh
And the faint nature. I was wrong; since you
Share the same thoughts, nor suffer the same illa.

Boteler. Indeed, I knew not this. Come to my roof:
'Tis poor, but not so bare as to deny
A soldier's viands to a scholar's wants.
Come, and we'll talk this over. I perceive
That your bold heart already is prepared,
And the details alone remain.—Come, friend,
Lean upon me, for you seem weak; the air
Will breathe this languor into health.

Aram. Your hearth

Is widow'd,—we shall be alone!

Boteler. Alone.

Aram. Come, then;—the private way. We'll shun the crowd
I do not love the insolent eyes of men.



Scene.

(*Night—a wild and gloomy Forest—the River at a distance.*)

Enter ARAM slowly

Aram. Were it but done, methinks 'twould scarce bequeath
Much food for that dull hypocrite Remorse.
'Tis a fool less on earth!—a clod—a grain
From the o'er-rich creation;—be it so.

But I, in one brief year, could give to men
 More solid, glorious, undecaying good
 Than his whole life could purchase:—yet without
 The pitiful and niggard dross *he wastes*,
 And *I* for lacking starve, my power is nought,
 And the whole good undone! Where, then, the crime,
 Though by dread means, to compass that bright end?
 And yet—and yet—I falter, and my flesh
 Creeps, and the horror of a ghastly thought
 Makes stiff my hair,—my blood is cold,—my knees
 Do smite each other,—and throughout my frame
 Stern manhood melts away. Blow forth, sweet air,
 Brace the mute nerves,—release the gathering ice
 That curdles up my veins,—call forth the soul,
 That, with a steady and unfailling front,
 Hath look'd on want, and woe, and early death—
 And walk'd with thee, sweet air, upon thy course
 Away from earth through the rejoicing heaven!
 Who moves there? — Speak!—who art thou!

SCENE V.

*Enter BORNIA.**Bolder.*

Murdoch Boteler!

Hast thou forestall'd me? Come, this bodeeth well:
 It proves thy courage, Aram.

Aram.

Rather say

The restless fever that doth spur us on
 From a dark thought unto a darker deed.

Boteler. He should have come ere this.*Aram.*

I pray thee, Boteler,

Is it not told of some great painter—whom
 Rome bore, and earth yet worships—that he slew
 A man—a brother man—and without ire,
 But with cool heart and hand, that he might fix
 His gaze upon the wretch's dying pangs;
 And by them learn what mortal throes to paint
 On the wrung features of a suffering God?

Boteler. Ay; I have heard the tale.*Aram.*

And he is honour'd.

Men vaunt his glory, but forget his guilt.
 They see the triumph; nor, with wolfish tongues,
 Feed on the deed from which the triumph grew
 Is it not so?

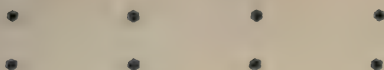
Boteler. Thou triflest : this no hour
 For the light legends of a gossip's lore——
Aram. Peace, man ! I did but question of the fact.
 Enough.—I marvel why our victim lingers !
Boteler. Hush ! dost thou hear no footstep ?—Ha, he comes !
 I see him by yon pine-tree. Look, he smiles ;
 Smiles as he walks, and sings ——
Aram. Alas ! poor fool !
 So sport we all, while over us the pall
 Hangs, and Fate's viewless hands prepare our shroud.

SCENE VI.

Enter Monson.

Monson. Ye have not waited, sirs !
Boteler. Nay, name it not.
Monson. The nights are long and bright : an hour the loss
 Makes little discount from the time.
Aram. An hour !
 What deeds an hour may witness !
Monson. It is true.
 (To *Boteler.*)—Dost he upbraid ?—he has a gloomy brow :
 I like him not.
Boteler. The husk hides goodly fruit.
 'Tis a deep scholar, Monson ; and the gloom
 Is not of malice, but of learned thought.
Monson. Say'st thou ?—I love a scholar. Let us on :
 We will not travel far to night !
Aram. Not far !
Boteler. Why, as our limbs avail ;—thou hast the gold !
Monson. Ay, and my wife suspects not.
Boteler. Come, that's well.
 I'm an old soldier, Monson, and I love
 This baffling of the Church's cankering ties.
 We'll find thee other wives, my friend !—Who holds
 The golden lure shall have no lack of loves.
Monson. Ha ! ha !—both wise and merry.—(To *Aram.*)—Come, sir, on.
Aram. I follow.
 (Aside.)— Can men sin thus in a dream !

[*Laughing.*]



SONNET.

Scene changes to a different part of the Forest—a Cave, overhung with firs and other trees—the Moon is at her full, but Clouds are rolling swiftly over her disc—Aram rushes from the Cavern.

Aram. 'Tis done!—'tis done—'tis done!—

A life is gone

Out of a crowded world! I struck no more!

Oh, God!—I did not slay him!—'twas not I!

(Enter BOTELER more slowly from the Cave, and looking round.)

Boteler. Why didst thou leave me ere our task was o'er?

Aram. Was he not dead, then!— Did he breathe again?
Or cry, "Help, help!"—I did not strike the blow!

Boteler. Dead!—and no witness, save the blinded bat!
But the gold, Aram! thou didst leave the gold!

Aram. The world! I had forgot. Thou hast the gold.
Come, let us share, and part—

Boteler. Not here; the spot
Is open, and the rolling moon may light

Some wanderer's footstep hither. To the deeps
Which the stars pierce not—of the inmost wood—
We will withdraw and share—and weave our plans,
So that the world may know not of this deed.

Aram. Thou sayest well! I did not strike the blow!
How red the moon looks! let us hide from her!

ACT II.

(Time, Ten Years after the date of the first Act.)

SCENE I

Peasants dancing—a beautiful Wood Scene—a Cottage in the foreground

MADELINE—LAMBOURN—MICHAEL.

(LAMBOURN comes forward.)

COME, my sweet Madeline, though our fate denies
 The pomp by which the great and wealthy mark
 The white days of their lot, at least thy air
 Can light with joyous faces and glad hearts
 The annual morn which brought so fair a boon,
 And blest his rude hearth with a child like thee.

Madeline. My father, my dear father, since that morn
 The sun hath call'd from out the depth of time
 The shapes of twenty summers; and no hour
 That did not own to Heaven thy love—thy care!

Lambourn. Thou hast repaid me; and mine eyes o'erflow
 With tears that tell thy virtues, my sweet child;
 For ever from thy cradle thou wert fill'd
 With meek and gentle thought; thy step was soft
 And thy voice tender; and within thine eyes,
 And on thy cloudless brow, lay deeply glass'd
 The quiet and the beauty of thy soul.
 As thou didst grow in years, the love and power
 Of nature wax'd upon thee;—thou wouldst pore
 On the sweet stillness of the summer hills,
 Or the hush'd face of waters, as a book
 Where God had written beauty; and in turn
 Books grew to thee, as Nature's page had grown,
 And study and lone musing nursed thy youth
 Yet wert thou ever woman in thy mood,
 And soft, though serious; nor in abstract thought
 Lost household zeal, or the meek cares of love.
 Bless thee, my child. Thou look'st around for one
 To chase the paler rose from that pure cheek,
 And the vague sadness from those loving eyes.
 Nay, turn not, Madeline, for I know, in tr

A TRAGEDY.

No man to whom I would so freely give
Thy hand as his—no man so full of wisdom,
And yet so gentle in his bearing of it ;
No man so kindly in his thoughts of others—
So rigid of all virtues in himself ;
As this same learned wonder, Eugene Aram.

Madeline. In sooth his name sounds lovelier for thy praise :
Would he were by to hear it ! for methinks
His nature given too much to saddening thought,
And words like thine would cheer it. Oft he starts
And mutters to himself, and folds his arms,
And traces with keen eyes the empty air ;
Then shakes his head, and smiles—no happy smile !

Lounsbourn. It is the way with students, for they live
In an ideal world, and people this
With shadows thrown from fairy forms afar.
Fear not !—thy love, like some fair morn of May,
Shall chase the dreams in clothing earth with beauty.
But the noon wanes, and yet he does not come.
Neighbours, has one amongst you seen this day
The scholar Aram !

Michael. By the hoary oak
That overhangs the brook, I mark'd this morn
A bending figure, motionless and lonely.
I near'd it, but it heard—it saw me—not ;
It spoke—I listen'd—and it said, " Ye leaves
That from the old and changeful branches fall
Upon the waters, and are borne away
Whither none know, ye are men's worthless lives ;
Ner boots it whether ye drop off by time,
Or the rude anger of some violent wind
Scatter ye ere your hour. Amidst the mass
Of your green life, who missees one lost leaf !"
He said no more ; then I did come beside
The speaker : it was Aram.

Madeline (aside). Moody ever !
And yet he says, he loves me and is happy !

Michael. But he seem'd gall'd and sore at my approach ;
And when I told him I was hither bound,
And ask'd if aught I should convey from him,
He frown'd, and coldly turning on his heel,
Answer'd—that " he should meet me." I was pain'd
To think that I had ver'd so good a man.

1st Neighbour. Ay, he is good as wise. All men love Aram.

2d Neighbour. And with what justice! My old dame's complaint
Had baffled all the leeches; but his art,
From a few simple herbs, distill'd a spirit
Has made her young again.

3d Neighbour. By his advice,
And foresight of the seasons, I did till
My land, and now my granaries scarce can hold
Their golden wealth; while those who mock'd his words
Can scarcely from hard earth and treacherous air
Win ought to keep the wolf from off their door.

Michael. And while he stoops to what poor men should know,
They say that in the deep and secret lore
That scholars mostly prize he hath no peer.
Old men, who pale and care-begone have lived
A life amidst their books, will, at his name,
Lift up their hands, and cry, "The wondrous man!"

Lambourn. His birth-place must thank Fortune for the fame
That he one day will win it.

Michael. Dost thou know
Whence Aram came, ere to these hamlet scenes
Ten summers since he wander'd?

Lambourn. Michael, no!
'Twas from some distant nook of our fair isle.
But he so sadly flies from what hath chanced
In his more youthful life, and there would seem
So much of winter in those April days,
That I have shunn'd vain question of the past.
Thus much I learn: he hath no kin alive;
No parent to exult in such a son.

Michael. Poor soul! You spake of sadness. Know you why
So good a man is sorrowful?

Lambourn. Methinks
He hath been tried—not lightly—by the sharp
And everlasting curse to learning doom'd,
That which poor labour bears without a sigh,
But whose mere breath can wither genius—Want!
Want—the harsh, hoary beldame—the obscene
Witch that hath power o'er brave men's thews and nerves,
And lifts the mind from out itself.

Michael. Why think you
That he hath been thus cross'd? His means appear
Enough, at least for his subdued desires.

Lambourn. I'll tell thee wherefore. Do but speak or want
And lo! he winces, and his nether lip

Quivers impatient, and he sighs, and frowns,
 And mutters—"Hunger is a fearful thing;
 And it is terrible that man's high soul
 Should be made barren in its purest aims
 By the mere lack of the earth's yellow clay."
 Then will he pause—and pause—and come at last
 And put some petty monies in my hand,
 And cry, "Go, feed the wretch; he must not starve,
 Or he will sin. Men's throats are scarcely safe,
 While Hunger prowls beside them!"

Michael.

The kind man!

But this comes only from a *gentle* heart,
 Not from a *tried* one.

Lambourn.

Nay, not wholly so;

For I have heard him, as he turn'd away,
 Mutter, in stifled tones, "No man can tell
 What want is in his brother man, unless
 Want's self hath taught him,—as the fiend taught me!"

Michael. And hath he ne'er enlarged upon these words,
 Nor lit them into clearer knowledge by
 A more pronounced detail?

Lambourn.

No; nor have I

Much sought to question. In my younger days
 I passed much time amid the scholar race,
 The learned lamps which light the unpitying world
 By their own self-consuming. They are proud—
 A proud and jealous tribe—and proud men loathe
 To speak of former sufferings: most of all
 Want's suffering, in the which the bitterest sting
 Is in the humiliation; therefore I
 Cover the past with silence. But what'er
 His origin or early fate, there lives
 None whom I hold more dearly, or to whom
 My hopes so well could trust my Madeline's lot.

SCENE II.

The Crowd at the back of the Stage gives way—Anan slowly enters—The Neighbour greets him with respect, several appear to thank him for various benefits or charities—He returns the greeting in dumb show, with great appearance of modesty.

Anan. Nay, nay, good neighbours, ye do make me blush
 To think that to so large a store of praise
 There goes so poor desert.—My Madeline!—Sweet,
 I see thee, and all brightens!

Lambourn.

You are late—

But not less welcome. On my daughter's birth-day
You scarce should be the last to wish her joy.

Aram. Joy—joy !—Is life so poor and harsh a boon
That we should hail each year that wears its gloss
And glory into winter ? Shall we crown
With roses Time's bald temples, and rejoice—
For what !—that we are hastening to the grave ?
No, no !—I cannot look on thy young brow,
Beautiful Madeline ! nor, upon the day
Which makes thee one year nearer unto Heaven,
Feel sad for Earth, whose very soul thou art ;—
Or art, at least, to me !—for wert thou not,
Earth would be dead and wither'd as the clay
Of her own offspring when the breath departs.

Lambourn. I scarce had thought a scholar's dusty tomes
Could teach his lips the golden ways to woo.
Howbeit, in all times, man never learns
To love, nor learns to flatter.

Well, my friends,

Will ye within ?—our simple fare invites.
Aram, when thou hast made thy peace with Madeline,
We shall be glad to welcome thee.—(To Michael.) This love
Is a most rigid fastener, and would come
To a quick ending in an Epicure.

[Exeunt LAMBOURN the Neighbours, &c.]

SCENE III.

MADELINE and ARAM.

Aram. Alone with thee !—Peace comes to earth again
Beloved ! would our life could, like a brook
Watering a desert, glide unseen away,
Murmuring our own heart's music,—which is love.
And glassing only Heaven,—which is love's life !
I am not made to live among mankind ;
They stir dark memory from unwilling sleep,
And—but no matter Madeline, it is strange
That one like thee, for whom, methinks, fair Love
Should wear its bravest and most gallant garb,
Should e'er have cast her heart's rich freight upon
A thing like me,—not fashion'd in the mould
Which wins a maiden's eye,—austere of life.
And grave and sad of bearing,—and so long

Inured to solitude, as to have grown
A man that hath the shape, but not the soul,
Of the world's inmates.

Madeline. 'Tis for that I loved.
The world I love not—therefore I love thee!
Come, shall I tell thee,—'tis an oft-told tale,
Yet never wearies,—by what bright degrees
Thy empire rose, till it o'erspread my soul,
And made my all of being love! Thou know'st
When first thou camest into these lone retreats,
My years yet dwelt in childhood; but my thoughts
Went deeper than my playmates'. Books I loved,
But not the books that woo a woman's heart;—
'I loved not tales of war and stern emprise,
And man let loose on man—dark deeds, of which
The name was glory, but the nature crime,—
Nor themes of vulgar love—of maidens' hearts
Won by small worth, set off by gaudy show;—
Those tales which win the wilder heart, in me
Did move some anger and a world of scorn.
All that I dream'd of sympathy was given
Unto the lords of Mind—the victor chiefs
Of Wisdom—or of Wisdom's music—Song;
And as I read of them, I dream'd, and drew
In my soul's colours, shapes my soul might love,
And, loving, worship,—they were like to thee!
Thou camest unknown and lonely,—and around
Thy coming, and thy bearing, and thy mood
Hung mystery,—and, in guessing at its clue,
Mystery grew interest, and the interest love!

Armenander. O woman! how from that which she should shun,
Does the poor trifler draw what charms her most!

Madeline. Then, as Time won thee frequent to our hearth,
Thou from thy learning's height didst stoop to teach me
Nature's more gentle secrets—the sweet lore
Of the green herb and the bee worshipp'd flower;
And when the night did o'er this nether earth
Distil meek quiet, and the heart of Heaven
With love grew breathless, thou wert wont to rouse
My wild thoughts to the weird and solemn stars;
Tell of each orb the courses and the name;
And of the winds, the clouds, th' invisible air,
Make eloquent discourse;—until methought
No human life, but some diviner spirit.

Alone could preach such truths of things divine.

And so—and so——

Aram. From heaven we turn'd to earth,
And Thought did father Passion !—Gentlest love !
If thou couldst know how hard it is for one
Who takes such feeble pleasure in this earth
To worship aught earth-born, thou 'dst learn how wild
The wonder of my passion and thy power.
But ere three days are past thou wilt be mine !
And mine for ever ! Oh, delicious thought !
How glorious were the future, could I shut
The past—the past—from——Ha ! what stirr'd ? didst hear
Madeline,—didst hear ?

Madeline. Hear what ?—the very air
Lies quiet as an infant in its sleep.

Aram (looking round). Methought I heard——

Madeline.

What, love ?

Aram.

It was a chase

Of these poor fools, the senses. Come, thy hand ;
I love to feel thy touch, thou art so pure—
So soft—so sacred in thy loveliness,
That I feel safe with thee ! Great God himself
Would shun to launch upon the brow of guilt
His bolt while thou wert by !

Madeline.

Alas, alas !

Why dost thou talk of guilt ?

Aram.

Did I, sweet love,

Did I say guilt ?—it is an ugly word.

Why, sweet, indeed—did I say guilt, my Madeline ?

Madeline. In truth you did. Your hand is dry—the pulses
Beats quick and fever'd : you consume too much
Of life in thought—you over-rack the nerves—
And thus a shadow bids them quail and tremble ;
But when I queen it, Eugene, o'er your home,
I'll see this fault amended.

Aram.

Ay,

In sooth thou shalt.

SCENE IV.

Enter MICHAEL.

Michael. Friend Lambourn sends his greeting,
And prays you to his ample banquet.

Maddeline. Come!

His rarest wine will in my father's cup
Seem dim till you can pledge him. Eugene, come.

Aram. And if I linger o'er the draught, sweet love,
Thou know I do but linger o'er the wish
For thee, which sheds its blessing on the bowl.

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• • • • •

SCENE.

*Exterior—a Wood-scene—a Cottage at a distance—in the foreground a Woodman
felling wood.*

Enter ARAM.

Wise men have praised the peasant's thoughtless lot,
And learned pride hath envied humble toil :
If they were right, why, let us burn our books,
And sit us down, and play the fool with Time,
Mocking the prophet Wisdom's grave decrees,
And walling this trite nonsense with dark clouds,
For night becomes our nature, and the ray
Even of the stars but meteors that withdraw
The wandering spirit from the sluggish rest
Which makes its proper bliss. I will accept
This denizen of toil, who, with hard hands,
Prolongs from day to day unthinking life,
And ask if he be happy.—Friend, good eve.

Woodman. 'Tis the great scholar !—Worthy sir, good eve.

Aram. Thou seem'st overworn : through this long summer day
Hast thou been labouring in the lonely glen ?

Woodman. Ay, save one hour at noon. 'Tis weary work ;
But men like me, good sir, must not repine
Which feeds the craving mouths at home.

Aram. Then thou art happy, friend, and with content
Thy life hath made a compact. Is it so?

Woodman. Why, as to that, sir, I must surely feel
Some pangs when I behold the ease with which
The wealthy live; while I, through heat and cold,
Can scarcely conquer Famine

• • • • •
• • • • •

• In this scene Boteler (the Houseman of the novel) is again introduced.



PAUL CLIFFORD.

PAUL CLIFFORD

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON
(LORD LYTTON)

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

LONDON: BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL.

NEW YORK: 9 LAFAYETTE PLACE

TO
ALBANY FONBLANQUE,

WHOSE ACUTENESS OF WIT IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THOSE WHO
OPPOSE HIS OPINIONS,—

WHOSE INTEGRITY OF PURPOSE IS YET MORE RESPECTED BY THOSE WHO
APPRECIATE HIS FRIENDSHIP,—

This Work
IS INSCRIBED.

July, 1840.

PREFACE
TO
THE EDITION OF 1840.

THIS Novel so far differs from the other fictions by the same author, that it seeks to draw its interest rather from practical than ideal sources. Out of some twelve Novels or Romances, embracing, however inadequately, a great variety of scene and character,—from “Pelham” to the “Pilgrims of the Rhine,”—from “Rienzi” to the “Last Days of Pompeii,”—“Paul Clifford” is the *only one* in which a robber has been made the hero, or the peculiar phases of life which he illustrates have been brought into any prominent description.

Without pausing to inquire what realm of manners, or what order of crime and sorrow are open to art, and capable of administering to the proper ends of fiction, I may be permitted to observe, that the present subject was selected, and the Novel written, with a twofold object :

First, to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz. a vicious Prison-discipline and a sanguinary Criminal Code,—the habit of corrupting the boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then hanging the man, at the first occasion, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders. Between the example of crime which the tyro learns from the felons in the prison-yard, and the horrible levity with which the mob gather round the drop at Newgate, there is a connection which a writer may be pardoned for quitting loftier regions of imagination to trace and to detect. So far this book is

less a picture of the king's highway than the law's royal road to the gallows,—a satire on the short cut established between the House of Correction and the Condemned Cell. A second and a lighter object in the novel of "Paul Clifford" (and hence the introduction of a semi-burlesque or travesty in the earlier chapters), was to shew that there is nothing essentially different between vulgar vice and fashionable vice,—and that the slang of the one circle is but an easy paraphrase of the cant of the other.

The Supplementary Essays, entitled "Tomlinsoniana," which contain the corollaries to various problems suggested in the Novel, have been restored to the present edition.

CLIFTON,

July 25, 1840.

PREFACE

TO

THE PRESENT EDITION, 1843.

MOST men, who, with some earnestness of mind, examine into the mysteries of our social state—will, perhaps, pass through that stage of self-education, in which this Novel was composed. The contrast between conventional frauds, received as component parts of the great system of civilisation, and the less deceptive invasions of the laws which discriminate the *meum* from the *tuum*, is tempting to a satire that is not without its justice. The tragic truths which lie hid, in what I may call the Philosophy of Circumstance—strike through our philanthropy upon our imagination. We see masses of our fellow-creatures—the victims of circumstances over which they had no control—contaminated in infancy by the example of parents—their intelligence either extinguished, or turned against them, according as the conscience is stifled in ignorance, or perverted to apologies for vice. A child who is cradled in ignominy; whose schoolmaster is the felon;—whose academy is the House of Correction;—who breathes an atmosphere in which virtue is poisoned, to which religion does not pierce—becomes less a responsible and reasoning human being than a wild beast which we suffer to range in the wilderness—till it prowls near our homes, and we kill it in self-defence.

In this respect, the Novel of ‘ Paul Clifford ’ is a loud cry to society

to amend the circumstance—to redeem the victim. It is an appeal from Humanity to Law. And, in this, if it could not pretend to influence, or guide the temper of the times, it was at least a foreshadow of a coming change. Between the literature of imagination, and the practical interests of a people, there is a harmony as complete as it is mysterious. The heart of an author is the mirror of his age. The shadow of the sun is cast on the still surface of literature, long before the light penetrates to law. But it is ever from the sun that the shadow falls, and the moment we see the shadow, we may be certain of the light.

Since this work was written, society is busy with the evils in which it was then silently acquiescent. The true movement of the last fifteen years has been the progress of one idea—Social Reform. There, it advances with steady and noiseless march behind every louder question of constitutional change. Let us do justice to our time. There have been periods of more brilliant action on the destinies of States—but there is no time visible in History in which there was so earnest and general a desire to improve the condition of the great body of the people. In every circle of the community that healthful desire is astir; it unites in one object men of parties the most opposed—it affords the most attractive nucleus for public meetings—it has cleansed the statute-book from blood; it is ridding the world of the hangman. It animates the clergy of all sects in the remotest districts; it sets the squire on improving cottages and parcelling out allotments. Schools rise in every village;—in books the lightest, the Grand Idea colours the page, and bequeathes the moral. The Government alone (despite the professions on which the present Ministry was founded) remains unpenetrated by the common genius of the age. But on that question, with all the subtleties it involves, and the experiments it demands—(not indeed according to the dreams of an insane philosophy, but according to the immutable laws which proportion the rewards of labour to the respect for property)—a Government must be formed at last.

There is in this work a subtler question suggested, but not solved. That question which perplexes us in the generous ardour of our early

youth—which, unsatisfactory as all metaphysics, we rather escape from than decide as we advance in years, viz.—make what laws we please, the man who lives within the pale can be as bad as the man without. Compare the Paul Clifford of the fiction with the William Brandon; the hunted son and the honoured father, the outcast of the law, the dispenser of the law—the felon, and the judge; and, as at the last, they front each other, one on the seat of justice, the other at the convict's bar, who can lay his hand on his heart and say, that the Paul Clifford is a worse man than the William Brandon?

There is no immorality in a truth that enforces this question; for it is precisely those offences which society cannot interfere with, that society requires fiction to expose. Society is right, though youth is reluctant to acknowledge it. Society can form only certain regulations necessary for its self-defence—the fewer the better—punish those who invade, leave unquestioned those who respect them. But fiction follows truth into all the strongholds of convention; strikes through the disguise, lifts the mask, bares the heart, and leaves a moral wherever it brands a falsehood.

Out of this range of ideas, the mind of the Author has, perhaps, emerged into an atmosphere which he believes to be more congenial to Art. But he can no more regret that he has passed through it, than he can regret that while he dwelt there, his heart, like his years, was young. Sympathy with the suffering that seems most actual—indignation at the frauds which seem most received as virtues—are the natural emotions of youth, if earnest: More sensible afterwards of the prerogatives, as of the elements, of Art, the author at least seeks to escape where the man may not, and look on the practical world through the sereener one of the ideal.

With the completion of this work closed an era in the writer's self-education. From "Pelham" to "Paul Clifford" (four fictions, all written at a very early age), the author rather observes than imagines; rather deals with the ordinary surface of human life, than attempts, however humbly, to soar above it or to dive beneath. From depicting in "Paul Clifford" the errors of society, it was almost the natural

progress of reflexion to pass to those which swell to crime in the solitary human heart,—from the bold and open evils that spring from ignorance and example, to track those that lie coiled in the entanglements of refining knowledge and speculative pride. Looking back at this distance of years, I can see, as clearly as if mapped before me, the paths which led across the boundary of invention from “Paul Clifford” to “Eugene Aram.” And, that last work done, no less clearly can I see where the first gleams from a fairer fancy broke upon my way, and rested on those more ideal images, which I sought, with a feeble hand, to transfer to the “Pilgrims of the Rhine,” and the “Last Days of Pompeii.” We authors, like the Children in the Fable, track our journey through the maze by the pebbles which we strew along the path. From others who wander after us, they may attract no notice, or, if noticed, seem to them but scattered by the caprice of chance. But we, when our memory would retrace our steps, review, in the humble stones, the witnesses of our progress—the landmarks of our way.

KNEBWORTH,

1848.

PAUL CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER I.

“ Say, ye oppress by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose,
Who press the downy couch while slaves advance
With unid eye to read the distant glance ;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease
To name the nameless ever-new disease ;
Who with much patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that none can cure :
How would you bear in real pain to lie
Despised, neglected, left alone to die ?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath
Where all that’s wretched paves the way to death ? ”

CRAIG.

[T was a dark and stormy night ; the rain fell in torrents—except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the house-tops, and heavily agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness. Through one of the obscurest quarters of London, and among haunts little loved by the gentlemen of the police, a man, evidently of the lowest orders, was wending his solitary way. He stopped twice or thrice at different shops and houses of a description corresponding with the appearance of the quarter in which they were situated,—and touched inquiry for some article or another which did not seem easily to be met with. All the answers he received were couched in the negative, and as he turned from each door he

muttered to himself, in no very elegant phraseology, his disappointment and discontent. At length, at one house, the landlord, a sturdy lurcher, after rendering the same reply the inquirer had hitherto received, added,—“ But if *this* will do as well, Dumme, it is quite at your service.” Pausing reflectively for a moment, Dumme responded, that he thought the thing proffered *might* do as well ; and thrusting it into his ample pocket he strode away with as rapid a motion as the wind and the rain would allow. He soon came to a nest of low and dingy buildings, at the entrance to which, in half-bossed characters, was written “Thomas Court.” Halting at the most conspicuous of these buildings, an inn or almshouse, through the half-closed windows of which blazed out in rudely comfort the beams of the hospitable hearth, he knocked hastily

at the door. He was admitted by a lady of a certain age, and endowed with a comely rotundity of face and person.

"Hast got it, Dummie?" said she quickly, as she closed the door on the guest.

"Noa, noa! not exactly—but I thinks as ow——"

"Pish, you fool!" cried the woman interrupting him, peevishly. "Vy, it is no use desaving me. You knows you has only stepped from my boosing ken to another, and you has not been arter the book at all. So there's the poor cretur a-raving and a-dying, and you——"

"Let I speak!" interrupted Dummie in his turn. "I tells you, I vent first to Mother Bussblone's, who, I know, chops the whiners morning and evening to the young ladies, and I axes there for a Bible, and she says, says she, 'I 'as only a "Companion to the Halter!" but you'll get a Bible, I thinks, at Master Talkins,—the cobbler, as preaches.' So I goes to Master Talkins, and he says, says he, 'I 'as no call for the Bible—'cause vy!—I 'as a call without; but mayhap you'll be a-getting it at the butcher's hover the way,—'cause vy!—the butcher'll be damned!' So I goes hover the way, and the butcher says, says he, 'I 'as not a Bible; but I 'as a book of plays bound for all the world just like 'un, and mayhap the poor cretur mayn't see the difference.' So I takes the plays, Mrs. Mangery, and here they be surely!—And how 's poor Judy?"

"Fearome! she 'll not be over the night, I 'm a-thinking."

"Vell, I'll track up the dancers!"

So saying, Dummie ascended a doorless staircase, across the entrance of which a blanket, stretched angularly from the wall to the chimney, afforded a kind of screen; and presently he stood within a chamber, which the dark and painful genius of Crabbe might have delighted to portray. The walls were white-washed, and at

sundry places strange figures and grotesque characters had been traced by some mischievous inmate, in such sabbie outline as the end of a smoked stick or the edge of a piece of charcoal is wont to produce. The wan and flickering light afforded by a farthing candle gave a sort of grimness and menace to these achievements of pictorial art, especially as they more than once received embellishment from portraits of Satan, such as he is accustomed to be drawn. A low fire burned gloomily in the sooty grate; and on the hob hissed "the still small voice" of an iron kettle. On a round deal table were two vials, a cracked cup, a broken spoon of some dull metal, and upon two or three mutilated chairs were scattered various articles of female attire. On another table, placed below a high, narrow, shutterless casement (athwart which, instead of a curtain, a checked apron had been loosely hung, and now waved fitfully to and fro in the gusts of wind that made easy ingress through many a chink and cranny), were a looking-glass, sundry appliances of the toilet, a box of coarse rouge, a few ornaments of more show than value; and a watch, the regular and calm click of which produced that indescribably painful feeling which, we fear, many of our readers who have heard the sound in a sick chamber can easily recall. A large tester-bed stood opposite to this table, and the looking-glass partially reflected curtains of a faded stripe, and ever and anon (as the position of the sufferer followed the restless emotion of a disordered mind), glimpses of the face of one on whom Death was rapidly hastening. Beside this bed now stood Dummie, a small, thin man, dressed in a tattered plush jerkin, from which the rain-drops slowly dripped, and with a thin, yellow, cunning physiognomy, grotesquely hideous in feature but not positively villanous in expression. On

the other side of the bed stood a little boy of about three years old, dressed as if belonging to the better classes, although the garb was somewhat tattered and discoloured. The poor child trembled violently, and evidently looked with a feeling of relief on the entrance of Dummie. And now there slowly, and with many a phylisical sigh, moved towards the foot of the bed the heavy frame of the woman who had accosted Dummie below, and had followed him, *hand parading upon*, to the room of the sufferer; she stood with a bottle of medicine in her hand, shaking its contents up and down, and with a kindly yet firm compassion spread over a countenance opacified with habitual libations. This made the scene, even that on a chair by the bed-side lay a profusion of long glossy golden ringlets, which had been cut from the head of the sufferer when the fever had begun to mount upwards; but which, with a jealousy that portrayed the darling silliness of a vain heart, she had saved and insisted on retreating over her, and save that, by the fire, perfectly inattentive to the event about to take place within the chamber, and to which we of the hoped race attach so awful an importation, lay a large grey cat, curled in a ball, and dozing with half-shut eyes, and ears first now and then downed, by a gentle infection, the jar of a louder or noisier sound than usual upon her fallacious senses. The dying woman and not at first attend to the entrance either of Dummie or the female at the foot of the bed; but she turned herself round towards the child, and clasping his arm firmly, she drew him towards her, and gazed on his terrified features with a look in which exhaustion and an exceeding sadness of complexion were even horribly contrasted by the glare and energy of delirium.

"If you are like Ann," she muttered, "I will strangle you, — I will

—ay—tremble! you ought to tremble, when your mother touches you, or when he is mentioned. You have his eyes,—you have! Out with them, out!—the devil sits laughing in them! Oh! you weep, do you, little one! Well now, be still, my love,—he hushed! I would not harm thee! harm—O God, he is my child after all!"—And at these words she clasped the boy passionately to her breast, and burst into tears!

"Coom now, coom!" said Dummie, soothingly. "Take the stuff, Judith, and then we'll talk over the hurchin!"

The mother relaxed her grasp of the boy, and turning towards the speaker, gazed at him for some moments with a bewildered stare: at length she appeared slowly to remember him, and said, as she raised herself on one hand, and pointed the other towards him with an inquiring gesture,—

"Thou hast brought the book!"

Dummie answered by lifting up the book he had brought from the honest butcher's.

"Clear the room, then!" said the sufferer, with that air of mock command so common to the insane. "We would be alone!"

Dummie winked at the good woman at the foot of the bed; and she (though generally no easy person to order or to persuade), left, without reluctance, the sick chamber.

"If she be a going to pray!" murmured our landlady (for that office did the good matron hold), "I may indeed as well take myself off, for it's not werry comfortable like to those who be old to hear all that 'ere!"

With this pious reflection, the hostess of the Mug, so was the hostelry called, heavily descended the drinking stairs.

"Now, man!" said the sufferer, sternly: "swear that you will never reveal,—swear, I say! and by the great God, whose angels are about this night, if ever you break the oath, I will come

back and haunt you to your dying day!"

Dummie's face grew pale, for he was superstitiously affected by the vehemence and the language of the dying woman, and he answered as he kissed the pretended Bible,—that he swore to keep the secret, as much as he knew of it, which, she must be sensible, he said, was very little. As he spoke, the wind swept with a loud and sudden gust down the chimney, and shook the roof above them so violently as to loosen many of the crumbling tiles, which fell one after the other, with a crashing noise, on the pavement below. Dummie started in affright; and perhaps his conscience smote him for the trick he had played with regard to the false Bible. But the woman, whose excited and unstrung nerves led her astray from one subject to another with preternatural celerity, said, with an hysterical laugh, "See, Dummie, they come in state for me, give me the cap—yonder! and bring the looking-glass!"

Dummie obeyed, and the woman, as she in a low tone uttered something about the unbecoming colour of the ribands, adjusted the cap on her head; and then saying in a regretful and petulant voice, "Why should they have cut off my hair?—such a disfigurement!" bade Dummie desire Mrs. Margery once more to ascend to her.

Left alone with her child, the face of the wretched mother softened as she regarded him, and all the levities and all the vehemences,—if we may use the word,—which, in the turbulent commotion of her delirium, had been stirred upward to the surface of her mind, gradually now sunk, as death increased upon her,—and a mother's anxiety rose to the natural level from which it had been disturbed and abased. She took the child to her bosom, and clasping him in her arms, which grew weaker with every instant, she soothed him with the

sort of chant which nurses sing over their untoward infants; but her voice was cracked and hollow, and as she felt it was so, the mother's eyes filled with tears—Mrs. Margery now re-entered; and, turning towards the hostess with an impressive calmness of manner which astonished and awed the person she addressed, the dying woman pointed to the child and said,—

"You have been kind to me, very kind, and may God bless you for it! I have found that those whom the world calls the worst are often the most human. But I am not going to thank you as I ought to do, but to ask of you a last and exceeding favour. Protect my child till he grows up: you have often said you loved him,—you are childless yourself,—and a morsel of bread and a shelter for the night, which is all I ask of you to give him, will not impoverish more legitimate claimants!"

Poor Mrs. Margery, fairly sobbing, vowed she would be a mother to the child, and that she would endeavour to rear him honestly, though a public-house was not, she confessed, the best place for good examples!

"Take him!" cried the mother hoarsely, as her voice, failing her strength, rattled indistinctly, and almost died within her. "Take him,—rear him as you will, as you can!—any example, any roof better than——" Here the words were inaudible. "And oh! may it be a curse, and a—— Give me the medicine, I am dying."

The hostess, alarmed, hastened to comply, but before she returned to the bedside the sufferer was insensible,—nor did she again recover speech or motion. A low and rare moan only testified continued life, and within two hours that ceased, and the spirit was gone. At that time our good hostess was herself beyond the things of this outer world, having supported her spirits during the vigils of the night with so many little liquid stimulants,

that they finally ran into that torpor which generally succeeds excitement. Taking, perhaps, advantage of the opportunity which the insensibility of the hostess afforded him, Dummie, by the expiring ray of the candle that burnt in the death chamber, hastily opened a huge box (which was generally concealed under the bed, and contained the wardrobe of the deceased), and turned with irreverent hand over the linens and the silks, until quite at the bottom of the trunk he discovered some packets of letters;—these he seized, and buried in the conveniences of his dress. He then, rising and replacing the box,

cast a longing eye towards the watch on the toilet table, which was of gold; but he withdrew his gaze, and with a querulous sigh, observed to himself, "The old blowen kens o' that, od rat her! but, howsomever, I'll take this; who knows but it may be of service—*tannies* to-day may be *smash* to-morrow!"* and he laid his coarse hand on the golden and silky treasures we have described. "Tis a rum business, and puzzles I! but mum's the word, for my own little col-quarren."†

With this brief soliloquy Dummie descended the stairs, and let himself out of the house.

CHAPTER II.

"Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place."

Deserted Village.

There is little to interest in a narrative of early childhood, unless indeed one were writing on education. We shall not, therefore, linger over the infancy of the motherless boy left to the protection of Mrs. Margery Lobkins, or, as she was sometimes familiarly called, Peggy or Peggy Lob. The good dame, drawing a more than sufficient income from the profits of a house, which, if situated in an obscure locality, enjoyed very general and lucrative repute; and being a lone widow without kith or kin, had no temptation to break her word to the deceased, and she entered the orphan to wax in strength and understanding until the age of twelve a period at which we are now about to reintroduce him to our readers.

The boy evinced great hardihood of temper, and no inconsiderable quickness of intellect. In whatever he attempted, his success was rapid, and a remarkable strength of limb and

muscle seconded well the dictates of an ambition turned, it must be confessed, rather to physical than mental exertion. It is not to be supposed however, that his boyish life passed in unbroken tranquillity. Although Mrs. Lobkins was a good woman on the whole and greatly attached to her *protégé*, she was violent and rustic in temper, or, as she herself more flatteringly expressed it, "her feelings were unkindly strong," and alternate quarrel and reconciliation constituted the chief occupations of the *protégé's* domestic life. As, previous to his becoming the ward of Mrs. Lobkins, he had never received any other appellation than "the child," so, the duty of christening him devolved upon our hostess of the Mug; and, after some deliberation, she blessed him with

* Meaning, what is of no value now may be precious hereafter.

† Col-quarren—cock.

the name of Paul—it was a name of happy omen, for it had belonged to Mrs. Lobkins' grandfather, who had been three times transported, and twice hanged (at the first occurrence of the latter description, he had been restored by the surgeons, much to the chagrin of a young anatomist who was to have had the honour of cutting him up). The boy did not seem likely to merit the distinguished appellation he bore, for he testified no remarkable predisposition to the property of ether people. Nay, although he sometimes emptied the pockets of any stray visitor to the coffee-room of Mrs. Lobkins, it appeared an act originating rather in a love of the frolic, than a desire of the profit; for after the plundered person had been sufficiently tormented by the loss, haply of such utilities as a tobacco-box, or a handkerchief; after he had, to the secret delight of Paul, searched every corner of the apartment, stamped, and fretted, and exposed himself by his petulance to the bitter objurgation of Mrs. Lobkins, our young friend would quietly and suddenly contrive, that the article missed should return of its own accord to the pocket from which it had disappeared. And thus, as our readers have doubtless experienced, when they have disturbed the peace of a whole household for the loss of some portable treasure which they themselves are afterwards discovered to have mislaid, the unfortunate victim of Paul's honest ingenuity, exposed to the collected indignation of the spectators, and sinking from the accuser into the convicted, secretly cursed the unhappy lot which not only vexed him with the loss of his property, but made it still more annoying to recover it.

Whether it was that, on discovering these pranks, Mrs. Lobkins trembled for the future bias of the address they displayed, or whether she thought that the folly of thieving without gain required speedy and permanent cor-

rection, we cannot decide; but the good lady became at last extremely anxious to secure for Paul the blessings of a liberal education. The key of knowledge (the art of reading she had, indeed, two years prior to the present date, obtained for him, but this far from satisfied her conscience: nay, she felt that, if she could not also obtain for him the discretion to use it, it would have been wise even to have withheld a key, which the boy seemed perversely to apply to all locks but the right one. In a word, she was desirous that he should receive an education far superior to those whom he saw around him. And attributing, like most ignorant persons, too great advantages to learning, she conceived that, in order to live as decorously as the parson of the parish, it was only necessary to know as much Latin.

One evening in particular, as the dame sat by her cheerful fire, this source of anxiety was unusually active in her mind, and ever and anon she directed unquiet and restless glances towards Paul, who sat on a form at the opposite corner of the hearth, diligently employed in reading the life and adventures of the celebrated Richard Turpin. The form on which the boy sat was worn to a glassy smoothness, save only in certain places, where some ingenious idler or another had amused himself by carving sundry names, epithets, and epigrammatic niceties of language. It is said, that the organ of carving upon wood is prominently developed on all English skulls; and the sagacious Mr. Combe has placed this organ at the back of the head, in juxtaposition to that of destructiveness, which is equally large among our countrymen, as is notably evinced upon all railings, seats, temples, and other things—belonging to other people.

Opposite to the fire-place was a large deal table, at which Dummie,

surmised Dannaker, seated near the door, was quietly reuniting over a glass of brandy and water. Farther on, at another table in the corner of the room, a gentleman with a red wig, very rusty garments, and linen which seemed as if it had been boiled in saffron, smoked his pipe, apart, silent, and apparently plunged in meditation. This gentleman was no other than Mr. Peter Mac Grawler, the editor of a magnificent periodical, entitled "The Asineum," which was written to prove, that whatever is popular is necessarily bad,—a valuable and record to truth, which "The Asineum" had satisfactorily demonstrated by running three printers and demolishing a publisher. We need not add, that Mr. Mac Grawler was Scotch by birth, since we believe it is pretty well known that all periodicals of this country have, from time immemorial, been monopolised by the gentlemen of the land of Cakes: we know not how it may be the fashion to eat the said cakes in Scotland, but *here* the good emigrants seem to like them carefully buttered on both sides. By the side of the editor stood a large pewter tankard, above him hung an engraving of the "wonderfully fat bear, formerly in the possession of Mr. Fatton, granger." To his left rose the dingy form of a thin, upright clock in an iron case, beyond the clock, a spit and a mustard were fastened in parallel to the wall. Below these two emblems of war and cookery were four shelves, containing plates of plaster and delf, and terminating, cantabulo, in a sort of dresser. At the other side of these domestic conveniences was a picture of Mrs. Lobkins, in a scarlet body, and a hat and plume. At the back of the fair hostess crunched the blanket we have before mentioned. As a relief to the monotonous surface of this simple screen, various ballads and learned legends were pinned to the blanket. These

might you read in verses, pathetic and unadorned, how,

"Sally loved a sailor lad
As fought with famous Shovel!"

There might you learn, if of two facts so instructive you were before unconscious, that

"Then the taper loved his bottle—
Charley only loved the lasses!"

When of these, and various other poetical effusions, you were somewhat wearied, the literary fragments, in humbler prose, afforded you equal edification and delight. There might you fully enlighten yourself as to the "Strange and Wonderful News from Kensington, being a most full and true Relation how a Maid there is supposed to have been carried away by an Evil Spirit on Wednesday, 15th of April last, about Midnight." There too, no less interesting and no less veracious, was that uncommon anecdote, touching the chief of many-throned powers, entitled, "The Divell of Masson, or the true Relation of the Chief Things which an Unclean Spirit did and said at Masson, in Burgundy, in the house of one Mr. Francis Percead: now made English by One that hath a Particular Knowledge of the Truth of the Story."

Nor were these materials for Satanic history the only prosaic and faithful chronicles which the bibliothecal blanket afforded equally wonderful, and equally indisputable, was the account of "a young lady, the daughter of a duke, with three legs, and the face of a porcupine." Nor less so, "The Awful Judgment of God upon Swearers, as exemplified in the case of John Stiles, who Dropped down Dead after swearing a Great Oath, and on stripping the unhappy man they found 'Swear not at all' written on the tail of his shirt!"

Twice had Mrs. Lobkins heaved a long sigh, as her eyes turned from

Paul to the tranquil countenance of Dummie Dunnaker, and now, resettling herself in her chair, as a motherly anxiety gathered over her visage,—

"Paul, my ben cull," said she, "what gibberish hast got there!"

"Turpin, the great highwayman!" answered the young student, without lifting his eyes from the page, through which he was spelling his instructive way.

"Oh! he be's a chip of the right block, dame!" said Mr. Dunnaker, as he applied his pipe to an illumined piece of paper. "He'll ride a oss foaled by a hacorn yet, I varrant!"

To this prophecy the dame replied only with a look of indignation, and rocking herself to and fro in her huge chair, she remained for some moments in silent thought. At last she again wistfully eyed the hopeful boy, and calling him to her side, communicated some order, in a dejected whisper. Paul, on perceiving it, disappeared behind the blanket, and presently returned with a bottle and a wine-glass. With an abstracted gesture, and an air that betokened continued meditation, the good dame took the inspiring cordial from the hand of her youthful cup-bearer,

"And ere a man had power to say 'Behold!' The jaws of Lobkins had devoured it up: So quick bright things come to confusion!"

The nectarean beverage seemed to operate cheerily on the matron's system; and placing her hand on the boy's curling head, she said, (like Andromache, *dakruon gelassosa*, or, as Scott hath it, "With a smile in her cheek, but a tear in her eye;")—

"Paul, thy heart be good!—thy heart be good!—Thou didst not spill a drop of the *tape*! Tell me, my honey, why didst thou lick Tom Tobyson?"

"Because," answered Paul, "he said as how you ought to have been hanged long ago!"

"Tom Tobyson is a good for nought," returned the dame, "and *deserves to shove the tumbler*;* but, oh my child! be not too venturesome in taking up the sticks for a blowen. It has been the ruin of many a man afore you, and when two men goes to quarrel for a 'oman, they doesn't know the natur of the thing they quarrels about;—mind thy latter end, Paul, and reverence the old, without axing what they has been before they passed into the wale of years;—thou may'st get me my pipe, Paul,—it is up-stairs, under the pillow."

While Paul was accomplishing this errand, the lady of the Mug, fixing her eyes upon Mr. Dunnaker, said, "Dummie, Dummie, if little Paul should come to be scragged!"

"Whish!" muttered Dummie, glancing over his shoulder at Mac Grawler,—"*mayhap that gemman*,"—here his voice became scarcely audible even to Mrs. Lobkins; but his whisper seemed to imply an insinuation, that the illustrious editor of "The Asineum" might be either an informer, or one of those heroes on whom an informer subsists.

Mrs. Lobkins' answer, couched in the same key, appeared to satisfy Dunnaker, for, with a look of great contempt, he chucked up his head, and said, "Oho! that be all, be it!"

Paul here reappeared with the pipe, and the dame, having filled the tube, leaned forward, and lighted the Virginian weed from the *blower* of Mr. Dunnaker. As in this interesting occupation the heads of the hostess and the guest approached each other, the glowing light playing cheerily on the countenance of each, there was an honest simplicity in the picture that would have merited the racy and vigorous genius of a Cruikshank. As soon as the Promethean spark had been fully communicated to the lady's

* Be whipped at the cart's tail.

tube, Mrs. Lockins, still possessed by the gossamer idea she had conjured up, repeated—

"Ah, Dummie, if little Paul should be surprised!" Dummie, withdrawing the pipe from his mouth, heaved a sympathising puff, but remained silent, and Mrs. Lockins, turning to Paul, who stood with mouth open and ears erect at this bed-lag suggestion, said—

"Dear thank, Paul, they'd have the heart to hang thee!"

"I think they'd have the rope, dame!" returned the youth.

"But you need not go for to run your neck into the noose!" said the matron, and then, inspired by the spirit of moralising, she turned round to the youth, and gazing upon his attentive countenance accosted him with the following admonitions:—

"Mind thy kiddy-damn, child, and reverence old age. Never steal, especially when any one be in the way. Never go snacks with them as be older than you,—'cause why? the older a cove be, the more he cares for his self and the less for his partner. At twenty, we diddles the pulpit; at forty, we diddles our cronies! Be modest, Paul, and stick to your situation in life. Go not with fine talkmen, who burn out like a candle not has a thief in it,—all there and gone in a twink! Leave liquor to the aged, who can't do without it. Time often proves a halter, and there be's no run like blue ruin! Read your Bible, and talk like a pious 'un. People goes more by your words than your actions. If you wants what is not your own, try and do without it; and if you cannot do without it, take it away by insinuation, not bluster. They as swindles, does more and risks less than they as robs, and if you cheats topplingly, you may laugh at the toppling cheat." And now go play!"

Paul seized his hat, but lingered,

and the dame guessing at his solicitation of the purse, drew back, and placed in the boy's hand the sum of five halfpence and one farthing. "There, boy," quoth she, and she stroked his head fondly when she spoke; "you does right not to play for nothing, it's loss of time! but play with those as be less than your self, and then you can go for to beat 'em if they says you go for to cheat."

Paul vanished; and the dame, laying her hand on Dummie's shoulder, said,—

"There be nothing like a friend in need, Dummie; and somehow or other, I thinks as how you knows more of the horridin of that 'ere lad than any of us!"

"Me, dame!" exclaimed Dummie, with a broad gaze of astonishment.

"Ah, you! you knows as how the mother saw more of you just afore she died, than she did of 'ere one of us. Noar, now—noar, now! tell us all about 'un. Did she steal 'un, think ye?"

"Lank, mother Margery! dost think I knows! Yet put such a croschet in your end!"

"Well!" said the dame with a disappointed sigh, "I always thought as how you were more knowing about it than you owns. Dear, dear, I shall never forgit the night when Judith brought the poor crotter here,—you knows she had been some months in my house afore ever I seed the unkin, and when she brought it, she looked so pale and ghostly, that I had not the heart to say a word, so I stared at the brat, and it stretched out its wee little hands to me. And the mother frowned at it, and throwed it into my lap!"

"Ah! she was a awful woman, that 'ere!" said Dummie, shaking his head. "But hoo-somever, the kiddy-far into good hands, for I be sure you 'as been a better mother to 'un than the real 'un!"

"I was always a fool about childer," rejoined Mrs. Lobkins; "and I thinks as how little Paul was sent to be a comfort to my latter end"—fill the glass, Dummie."

"I 'as heard as ow Judith was once blowen to a great lord!" said Dummie.

"Like enough" returned Mrs. Lobkins—"like enough! She was always a favourite of mine, for she had a spuret (spirit) as big as my own; and she paid her rint like a decent body, for all she was out of her sinsea, or nation like it."

"Ay, I *knows* as how you liked her,—'cause vy!—'tis not your vay, to let a room to a voman! You says as how 'tis not respectable, and you only likes *men* to visit the Mug!"

"And I doesn't like all of them as comes here!" answered the dame: "'specially for Paul's sake; but what can a lone 'oman do? Many's the gentleman highwayman wot comes here, whose money is as good as the clerk's of the parish. And when a bob* is in my hand, what does it sinnify whose hand it was in afore?"

"That's what I call being sinsible and *practical*," said Dummie, approvingly. "And arter all, though you 'as a mixture like, I does not know a halehouse where a cove is better entertained, nor meets of a Sunday more illigant company, than the Mug."

Here the conversation, which the reader must know had been sustained in a key inaudible to a third person, received a check from Mr. Peter Mac Grawler, who, having finished his revery and his tankard, now rose to depart. First, however, approaching Mrs. Lobkins, he observed that he had gone on credit for some days, and demanded the amount of his bill. Glancing towards certain chalk hieroglyphics inscribed on the wall at the other side of the fire-place, the dame answered, that Mr. Mac Grawler was

indebted to her for the sum of one shilling and ninepence three farthings.

After a short preparatory search in his waistcoat pockets, the critic hunted into one corner a solitary half-crown, and having caught it between his finger and thumb, he gave it to Mrs. Lobkins, and requested change.

As soon as the matron felt her hand anointed with what has been called by some ingenious Johnson of St. Giles's "the oil of palma," her countenance softened into a complacent smile; and when she gave the required change to Mr. Mac Grawler, she graciously hoped as how he would recommend the Mug to the public.

"That you may be sure of," said the editor of "The Asinseum." "There is not a place where I am so much at home."

With that the learned Scotsman buttoned his coat and went his way.

"How spiteful the world be!" said Mrs. Lobkins after a pause, "'specially if a 'oman keeps a fashionable sort of a public! When Judith died, Joe, the dog's-meat man, said I war all the better for it, and that she left I a treasure to bring up the urchin. One would think a thumper makes a man richer,—'cause why!—every man *thumps*! I got nothing more than a watch and ten guineas when Judy died, and sure that scarce paid for the burrel (burial)."

"You forgits the two *quids** I giv' you for the hold box of rags,—much of a treasure I found there!" said Dummie, with sycophantic archness.

"Ay," cried the dame, laughing, "I fancies you war not pleased with the bargain. I thought you war too old a rag-merchant to be so free with the blunt: howsomever, I supposes it war the tinsel petticoat as took you in!"

"As it has mony a viser man than

* Shilling.

* Guineas.

the like of it," rejoined Dummie, who to his various great professions added the ostensible one of a wig merchant and dealer in broken glass.

The resolution of her good husband to the box of rags opened our landlady's heart.

"Drink, Dummie," said she good-humouredly,—"drink, I scorn to share back to a friend."

Dummie expressed his gratitude, refilled his glass, and the hospitable mistress, knocking out from her pipe the dying ashes, thus proceeded:—

"You see, Dummie, though I often beats the boy, I loves him, as much as if I wat his real mother—I wants to make him an honour to his country and an exception to my family."

"Who all dashed their ivories at Samson's Hall?" added the metropolitan Dummie.

"True?" said the lady,—"they did game, and I ben't ashamed of em. But I owes a duty to Paul's mother, and I wants Paul to have a long life. I would send him to school, but you know as how the boys only corrupt one another. And so, I should like to meet with some decent man as a tutor, to teach the lad Latin and varsum!"

"My eyes!" cried Dummie, aghast at the grandeur of this desire.

"The boy is 'cute enough, and he loves reading," continued the dame, "But I shew not gluck the books he gets hold of will teach him the way to prose and."

"And so came he to read anyhow?"

"Ranting Rob, the strolling player, taught him his letters, and said he'd a deal of janua!"

"And why should not Ranting Rob teach the boy Latin and varsum?"

"'Cause Ranting Rob, poor fellow, *was layed for doing a passy!*"* answered the dame, despondently.

There was a long silence: it was broken by Mr. Dummie: slapping his thigh with the gesticulatory vehemence of an Ugo Foscolo, that gentleman exclaimed:—

"I 'as it—I 'as thought of a tutor for leetle Paul!"

"Who's that?—you quite frightens me, you 'as no murey on my nerves," said the dame, fretfully.

"Vy it be the gemman vot writes," said Dummie, putting his finger to his nose,—"the gemman vot payed you so flashly!"

"What! the Scotch gemman?"

"The werry same!" returned Dummie.

The dame turned in her chair, and refilled her pipe. It was evident from her manner that Mr. Dunnaker's suggestion had made an impression on her. But she recognised two doubts as to its feasibility: one, whether the gentleman proposed would be adequate to the task; the other, whether he would be willing to undertake it.

In the midst of her meditations on this matter, the dame was interrupted by the entrance of certain elements on her hospitality; and Dummie soon after taking his leave, the suspense of Mrs. Lockins' mind touching the education of little Paul remained the whole of that day and night utterly unrelieved.

* Transported for burglary.

CHAPTER III.

"I own that I am envious of the pleasure you will have in finding yourself more learned than other boys—even those who are older than yourself! What honour this will do you! What distinctions, what applauses will follow wherever you go!"

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S *Letters to His Son*.

"Example, my boy—example is worth a thousand precepts."

MAXIMILIAN SOLENN.

TARPEIA was crushed beneath the weight of ornaments! The language of the vulgar is a sort of Tarpeia! We have therefore relieved it of as many gems as we were able; and, in the foregoing scene, presented it to the gaze of our readers, *simpliciter mandatis*. Nevertheless, we could timidly imagine some gentler beings of the softer sex rather displeased with the tone of the dialogue we have given, did we not recollect how delighted they are with the provincial barbarities of the sister kingdom, whenever they meet them poured over the pages of some Scottish story-teller. As, unhappily for mankind, broad Scotch is not yet the universal language of Europe, we suppose our countrywomen will not be much more unacquainted with the dialect of their own lower orders, than with that which breathes nasal melodies over the paradise of the North.

It was the next day, at the hour of twilight, when Mrs. Margery Lobkins, after a satisfactory *blat-a-tite* with Mr. Mac Grawler, had the happiness of thinking that she had provided a tutor for little Paul. The critic having recited to her a considerable portion of *Propria quæ Maribus*, the good lady had no longer a doubt of his capacities for teaching; and, on the other hand, when Mrs. Lobkins entered on the subject of remuneration, the Scotsman professed himself perfectly willing to teach any and

every thing that the most exacting guardian could require. It was finally settled that Paul should attend Mr. Mac Grawler two hours a-day; that Mr. Mac Grawler should be entitled to such animal comforts of meat and drink, as the Mug afforded; and, moreover, to the weekly stipend of two shillings and sixpence, the shillings for instruction in the classics, and the sixpence for all other humanities; or, as Mrs. Lobkins expressed it, "two bobs for the Latin, and a sice for the vartue!"

Let not thy mind, gentle reader, censure us for a deviation from probability, in making so excellent and learned a gentleman as Mr. Peter Mac Grawler the familiar guest of the lady of the Mug. First, thou must know that our story is cast in a period antecedent to the present, and one in which the old jokes against the circumstances of author and of critic had their foundation in truth; secondly, thou must know, that by some curious concatenation of circumstances, neither bailiff nor bailiff's man was ever seen within the four walls continent of Mrs. Margery Lobkins; thirdly, the Mug was nearer than any other house of public resort to the abode of the critic; fourthly, it afforded excellent porter; and fifthly,—O reader, thou dost Mrs. Margery Lobkins a grievous wrong, if thou supposeth that her door was only open to those mercurial gentry

who are afflicted with the morbid curiosity to pry into the mysteries of their neighbours' pockets. — other visitors of less repute were not unoften partakers of the good matron's hospitality, although it must be owned that they generally occupied the private room in preference to the public one. And sixthly, sweet reader (we strive to be so proxia), we would just hint to thee, that Mr. Mac Grawler was one of those vast-minded sages who, occupied in contemplating morals in the great scale, do not frown down their intellects by a base attention to minute details. So that, if a descendant of Langfanger did sometimes cross the venerable Scot in his visit to the Mag, the apparition did not revolt that benevolent moralist so much as, were it not for the above hint, thy ignorance might lead thee to imagine.

It is said, that Athenodorus the Stoic contributed greatly by his conversation to amend the faults of Augustus, and to effect the change visible in that fortunate man, after his accession to the Roman empire. If this be true, it may throw a new light on the character of Augustus, and, instead of being the hypocrite, he was possibly the convert. Certain it is, that there are few vices which cannot be conquered by wisdom; and yet, unluckily to relate, the instructions of Peter Mac Grawler produced but slender amendment in the habits of the youthful Paul. That ingenious step-mother had, we have already seen, under the tuition of Rastus Rob, mastered the art of reading; nay, he could even construct and link together certain curious pocket-books, which himself and Mrs. Lobkins were wont gravely to term "writing." So far, then, the way of Mac Grawler was smoothed and prepared.

But, unhappily, all experienced teachers allow that the main difficulty is not to learn, but to unlearn,

and the mind of Paul was already occupied by a vast number of heterogeneous miscellanies, which stoutly resisted the ingress either of Latin or of virtue. Nothing could wean him from an ominous affection for the history of Richard Turpin: it was to him what, it has been said, the Greek authors should be to the Academician,—a study by day, and a dream by night. He was docile enough during lessons, and sometimes even too quick in conception for the stately march of Mr. Mac Grawler's intellect. But it not unfrequently happened, that when that gentleman attempted to rise, he found himself, like the lady in Comus, adhering to—

"A venomous seat
Smear'd with gums of glutinous heat."

or his legs had been secretly united under the table, and the tie was not to be broken without overthrow to the superior powers; these, and various other little sportive machinations wherewith Paul was wont to relieve the monotony of literature, went far to disgust the learned critic with his undertaking. But "the tape" and the treasury of Mrs. Lobkins re-smoothed, as it were, the irritated bristles of his mind, and he continued his labours with this philosophical reflection:—"Why fret myself?—if a pupil turn out well, it is surely to the credit of his master; if not, to the disadvantage of himself." Of course a similar suggestion never forced itself into the mind of Dr. Keate.* At Eton, the very soul of the honest head-master is consumed by his zeal for the welfare of little gone boys in stiff cravats.

But to Paul, who was predestined to enjoy a certain quantum of knowledge, circumstances happened in the commencement of the second year of

* A celebrated Principal of Eton.

his pupilage, which prodigiously accelerated the progress of his scholastic career.

At the apartment of Mac Grawler, Paul one morning encountered Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, a young man of great promise, who pursued the peaceful occupation of chronicling in a leading newspaper, "Horrid Murders," "Enormous Melons," and "Remarkable Circumstances." This gentleman, having the advantage of some years' seniority over Paul, was slow in unbending his dignity; but observing at last the eager and respectful attention with which the stripling listened to a most veracious detail of five men being inhumanly murdered in Canterbury Cathedral by the Reverend Zedekiah Pooks Barnacle, he was touched by the impression he had created, and shaking Paul graciously by the hand, he told him there was a deal of natural shrewdness in his countenance; and that Mr. Augustus Tomlinson did not doubt but that he (Paul) might have the honour to be murdered himself one of these days.—"You understand me!" continued Mr. Augustus,—"I mean murdered in effigy,—assassinated in type,—while you yourself, unconscious of the circumstance, are quietly enjoying what you imagine to be your existence. We never kill common persons: to say truth, our chief spite is against the Church;—we destroy bishops by wholesale. Sometimes, indeed, we knock off a leading barrister or so; and express the anguish of the junior counsel at a loss so destructive to their interests. But that is only a stray hit; and the slain barrister often lives to become attorney-general, renounce Whig principles, and prosecute the very press that destroyed him. Bishops are our proper food: we send them to heaven on a sort of flying griffin, of which the back is an apoplexy, and the wings are puffs. The Bishop of —, whom we despatched in this manner the

other day, being rather a facetious personage, wrote to remonstrate with us thereon; observing, that though heaven was a very good translation for a bishop, yet that, in such cases, he preferred 'the original to the translation.' As we murder bishops, so is there another class of persons whom we only afflict with lethiferous diseases. This latter tribe consists of his Majesty and his Majesty's ministers. Whenever we cannot abuse their measures, we always fall foul on their health. Does the king pass any popular law,—we immediately insinuate that his constitution is on its last legs. Does the minister act like a man of sense,—we instantly observe, with great regret, that his complexion is remarkably pale. There is one manifest advantage in *diseasing* people, instead of absolutely destroying them. The public may flatly contradict us in one case, but it never can in the other:—it is easy to prove that a man is alive: but utterly impossible to prove that he is in health. What if some opposing newspaper take up the cudgels in his behalf, and assert that the victim of all Pandora's complaints, whom we send tottering to the grave, passes one half the day in knocking up a 'distinguished company' at a shooting-party, and the other half in outdoing the same 'distinguished company' after dinner? What if the afflicted individual himself write us word that he never was better in his life?—we have only mysteriously to shake our heads and observe, that to contradict is not to prove,—that it is little likely that our authority should have been mistaken, and—(we are very fond of an historical comparison)—beg our readers to remember, that when Cardinal Richelieu was dying, nothing enraged him so much as hinting that he was ill. In short, if Horace is right, we are the very princes of poets; for I dare say, Mr. Mac Grawler, that you, —and you, too, my little gentleman,

perfectly remember the words of the wise old Roman, —

*Ille qui eximium facinorosi peccator violator
Iste poete, pueri, pro peccatis muneratur amicis,
Irratus mulier, facies terribilis inopit.*"*

Having uttered this quotation with considerably self-complacency, and thereby entirely completed his conquest over Paul, Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, turning to Mac Crawley, concluded his business with that gentleman, which was of a literary nature, namely a joint composition against a man who, being under five-and-twenty, and too poor to give dinners, had had the impudence to write a second poem. The critics were extremely bitter at this, and having very little to say against the poem, the Court journals called the author a "cunning," and the liberal ones "the son of a pantaloons!"

There was an *ouzo*, — a spirit, — a life about Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, which invigorated the senses of our young hero; then, too, he was exceedingly smartly attired; wore red heels and a bag; and what seemed to Paul quite the attire of a "man of fashion," and, above all, he spoke the Latin with a remarkable grace!

Some days afterwards, Mac Crawley sent our hero to Mr. Tomlinson's lodgings, with his share of the joint treat upon the poet.

Deeply was Paul's reverence for Mr. Augustus Tomlinson increased by a sight of his abode. He found him seated in a polite part of the town, in a very agreeable parlour, the contents of which manifested the universal genius of the landlord. It had been explained unto us by a most discerning critic, that we are addicted to the doctrine of "universal genius;" We plead Not Guilty in former instances; we allow the soft impeachment in the

instance of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson. Over his fireplace were arranged boxing gloves and fencing foils. On his table lay a crenoma and a flagolet. On one side of the wall were shelves containing the Covent Garden Magazine, Burn's Justice, a pocket Horace, a Prayer-book, *Excerpta ex Tacito*, a volume of Plays, Philosophy made Easy, and a Key to all Knowledge. Furthermore, there were on another table a riding-whip, and a driving-whip, and a pair of spurs, and three guineas, with a little mountain of loose silver. Mr. Augustus was a tall, fair young man, with a freckled complexion; green eyes and red eyelids; a smiling mouth, rather under-jawed; a sharp nose, and a prodigiously large pair of ears. He was robed in a green damask dressing-gown; and he received the tender Paul most graciously.

There was something very engaging about our hero. He was not only good looking, and frank in aspect, but he had that appearance of briskness and intellect which belongs to an embryo rogue. Mr. Augustus Tomlinson professed the greatest regard for him, — asked him if he could box — made him put on a pair of gloves — and, very condescendingly, knocked him down three times successively. Next he played him, both upon his flagolet and his crenoma, some of the most modish airs. Moreover, he sang him a little song of his own composing. He then, taking up the driving-whip, flanked a fly from the opposite wall, and throwing himself (naturally fatigued with his numerous exertions on his sofa, he observed, in a careless tone, that he and his friend Lord Dunsinmer were universally esteemed the best whips in the metropolis. "I," quoth Mr. Augustus, "am the best on the road; but my lord is a devil at turning a corner."

Paul, who had hitherto lived too unsophisticated a life to be aware of

* He appears to me to be, to the fullest extent, a poet, who, with accurate and beautiful diction, clothes it with unusual language.

the importance of which a lord would naturally be in the eyes of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, was not so much struck with the grandeur of the connexion as the murder of the journals had expected. He merely observed, by way of compliment, that Mr. Augustus and his companion seemed to be "rolling kiddies."

A little displeased with this metaphorical remark—for it may be observed that "rolling kiddy" is, among the learned in such lore, the customary expression for "a smart thief"—the universal Augustus took that liberty to which, by his age and station, so much superior to those of Paul, he imagined himself entitled, and gently reproved our hero for his indiscriminate use of flash phrases.

"A lad of your parts," said he,—
"for I see you are clever by your eyes,
—ought to be ashamed of using such vulgar expressions. Have a nobler spirit—a loftier emulation, Paul, than that which distinguishes the little ragamuffins of the street. Know that, in this country, genius and learning carry every thing before them; and if you behave yourself properly, you may, one day or another, be as high in the world as myself."

At this speech Paul looked wistfully round the spruce parlour, and thought what a fine thing it would be to be lord of such a domain, together with the appliances of flageolet and cremona, boxing gloves, books, fly flanking flagellum, three guineas, with the little mountain of silver, and the reputation—shared only with Lord Dunsunner—of being the best whip in London.

"Yes!" continued Tomlinson, with conscious pride, "I owe my rise to myself. Learning is better than house and land. '*Doctrina sed vim*,' &c. You know what old Horace says! Why, sir, you would not believe it; but I was the man who killed his majesty the King of Sardinia in our

yesterday's paper. Nothing is too arduous for genius. Fag hard, my boy, and you may rival—for the thing, though difficult, may not be impossible—Augustus Tomlinson!"

At the conclusion of this harangue, a knock at the door being heard, Paul took his departure, and met in the hall a fine-looking person dressed in the height of the fashion, and wearing a pair of prodigiously large buckles in his shoes. Paul looked, and his heart swelled. "I may rival," thought he—those were his very words—"I may rival—for the thing, though difficult, is not impossible—Augustus Tomlinson!" Absorbed in meditation, he went silently home. The next day the memoirs of the great Turpin were committed to the flames, and it was noticeable that henceforth Paul observed a choicer propriety of words,—that he assumed a more refined air of dignity, and that he paid considerably more attention than heretofore to the lessons of Mr. Peter Mac Grawler. Although it must be allowed that our young hero's progress in the learned languages was not astonishing, yet an early passion for reading growing stronger and stronger by application, repaid him at last with a tolerable knowledge of the mother-tongue. We must, however, add that his more favourite and cherished studies were scarcely of that nature which a prudent preceptor would have greatly commended. They lay chiefly among novels, plays, and poetry, which last he affected to that degree that he became somewhat of a poet himself. Nevertheless these literary avocations, profitless as they seemed, gave a certain refinement to his tastes, which they were not likely otherwise to have acquired at the Mug; and while they aroused his ambition to see something of the gay life they depicted, they imparted to his temper a tone of enterprise and of thoughtless gene-

quality, which perhaps contributed greatly to counteract those evil influences towards petty vice, to which the examples around him must have exposed his tender youth. But, alas! a great disappointment to Paul's hope of assistance and companionship in his literary labours befel him. Mr Augustus Tomlinson, one bright morning, disappeared, leaving word with his numerous friends, that he was going to accept a lucrative situation in the North of England. Notwithstanding the shock this occasioned

to the affectionate heart and aspiring temper of our friend Paul, it abated not his ardour in that field of science, which it seemed that the distinguished absentee had so successfully cultivated. By little and little, he possessed himself (in addition to the literary stores we have alluded to) of all it was in the power of the wise and profound Peter Mac Grawler to impart unto him; and at the age of sixteen he began (O the presumption of youth!) to fancy himself more learned than his master.

CHAPTER IV.

"He had now become a young man of extreme fashion, and as much *répandu* in society as the utmost and most exigent carter of London celebrity could desire. He was, of course, a member of the clubs, &c. &c. &c. He was, in short, of that oft described set before whom all former beaux sink into insignificance, or among whom they eventually obtain a subaltern grade, by a sacrifice of a due portion of their fortune."—*Almack's Revisited.*

By the soul of the great Malebranche, who made "A Search after Truth," and discovered everything beautiful except that which he searched for,—by the soul of the great Malebranche, whom Bishop Berkeley found suffering under an inflammation in the lungs, and very obligingly *talked to death*,—an instance of conversational powers worthy the envious emulation of all great metaphysicians and arguers,—by the soul of that illustrious man, it is amazing to us what a number of truths there are broken up into little fragments, and scattered here and there through the world. What a magnificent museum a man might make of the precious materials, if he would but go out with his basket under his arm, and his eyes about him! We, ourselves, packed up, this very day, a certain small piece of truth, with which we propose to explain to thee, fair reader, a sinister turn in the fortunes of Paul.

"Wherever," says a living sage, "you see dignity, you may be sure there is expense requisite to support it."* So was it with Paul. A young gentleman who was heir presumptive to the Mug, and who enjoyed a hand some pension with a cultivated mind, was necessarily of a certain station of society, and an object of respect in the eyes of the manoeuvring mammas of the vicinity of Thames Court. Many were the parties of pleasure to Deptford and Greenwich which Paul found himself compelled to attend, and we need not refer our readers to novels upon fashionable life, to inform them that, in good society, the *gentleman always pays for the ladies!* Nor was this all the expense to which his expectations exposed him. A gentleman could scarcely attend these elegant festivities without devoting some little attention to his dress; and a

* - Popular Fallacy."

fashionable tailor plays the deuce with one's yearly allowance!

We, who reside, be it known to you, reader, in Little Brittain, are not very well acquainted with the manners of the better classes in St. James's. But there was one great vice among the fine people about Thames Court, which we make no doubt does not exist any where else, viz., these fine people were always in an agony to seem finer than they were; and the more airs a gentleman or a lady gave him or herself, the more important they became. Joe, the dog's meat man, had indeed got into society, entirely from a knack of saying impertinent things to every body; and the smartest exclusives of the place, who seldom visited any one where there was not a silver teapot, used to think Joe had a great deal in him because he trundled his cart with his head in the air, and one day gave the very beadle of the parish "the cut direct."

Now this desire to be so exceedingly fine not only made the society about Thames Court unpleasant, but expensive. Every one vied with his neighbour; and as the spirit of rivalry is particularly strong in youthful bosoms, we can scarcely wonder that it led Paul into many extravagances. The evil of all circles that profess to be select is high play,—and the reason is obvious: persons who have the power to bestow on another advantage he covets, would rather sell it than give it; and Paul, gradually increasing in popularity and *ton*, found himself, in spite of his classical education, no match for the finished, or, rather, finishing gentlemen with whom he began to associate. His first admittance into the select coterie of these men of the world was formed at the house of Bachelor Bill, a person of great notoriety among that portion of the *élite* which emphatically entitles itself "Flash!" However, as it is our rigid intention in this work to portray

at length no episodic characters whatsoever, we can afford our readers but a slight and rapid sketch of Bachelor Bill.

This personage was of Devonshire extraction. His mother had kept the pleasantest public house in town, and at her death Bill succeeded to her property and popularity. All the young ladies in the neighbourhood of Fiddler's Row, where he resided, set their caps at him: all the most fashionable *prigs*, or *tohywens*, sought to get him into their set; and the most crack *blowens* in London would have given her ears at any time for a loving word from bachelor Bill. But Bill was a long-headed, prudent fellow, and of a remarkably cautious temperament. He avoided marriage and friendship, viz., he was neither plundered nor cornuted. He was a tall, aristocratic *cove*, of a devilish neat address, and very gallant, in an honest way, to the *blowens*. Like most single men, being very much the gentleman so far as money was concerned, he gave them plenty of "feeds," and from time to time a very agreeable "hop." His "bingo" was unexceptionable; and as for his "stark-naked,"† it was voted the most brilliant thing in nature. In a very short time, by his blows-out and his bachelorship,—for single men always arrive at the apex of *haut ton* more easily than married,—he became the very glass of fashion; and many were the tight apprentices, even at the west end of the town, who used to turn back in admiration of Bachelor Bill, when, of a Sunday afternoon, he drove down his varment gig to his snug little box on the borders of Turnham Green. Bill's happiness was not, however, wholly without alloy. The ladies of pleasure are always so excessively angry when a man does not make love to them, that there is nothing they will not say

* Brandy.

† Gin.

against him; and the fair matrons in the vicinity of Fiddler's Row spread all manner of unfounded reports against poor Bachelor Bill. By degrees, however,—for, as Tacitus has said, doubtless with a prophetic eye to Bachelor Bill, “the truth gains by delay,”—these reports began to die insensibly away; and Bill, now waxing near to the confines of middle age, his friends comfortably settled for him that he would be Bachelor Bill all his life. For the rest, he was an excellent fellow,—gave his broken victuals to the poor,—professed a liberal turn of thinking, and in all the quarrels among the blowens (your crack blowens are a quarrelsome set) always took part with the weakest. Although Bill pretended to be very select in his company, he was never forgetful of his old friends; and Mrs. Margery Lobkins having been very good to him when he was a little boy in a skeleton jacket, he lovingly sent her a card to his *coirées*. The good lady, however, had not of late years deserted her chimney corner. Indeed, the rigour of fashionable life was too much for her nerves, and the invitation had become a customary form not expected to be acted upon, but not a writ that was regularly used for that reason. As Paul had now attained his sixteenth year, and was a fine, handsome lad, the dame thought he would make an excellent representative of the Mug's mistress; and that, for her *protégé*, a ball at Bill's house would be no bad commencement of “Life in London.” Accordingly, she intimated to the Bachelor a wish to that effect, and Paul received the following invitation from Bill:—

“Mr. William Duke gives a hop and feed in a quiet way on Monday next, and hopes Mr. Paul Loddens will be at the party. N.B. Gentlemen are expected to come in pumps.”

When Paul entered, he found Ba-

chelor Bill leading off the ball to the tune of “Drops of Brandy,” with a young lady to whom—because she had been a strolling player—the Ladies Patronesses of Fiddler's Row had thought proper to behave with a very cavalier civility. The good bachelor had no notion, as he expressed it, of such tantrums, and he caused it to be circulated among the finest of the blowens, that “he expected all who kicked their heels at his house would behave decent and polite to young Mrs. Dot.” This intimation, conveyed to the ladies with all that insinuating polish for which Bachelor Bill was so remarkable, produced a notable effect; and Mrs. Dot, being now led off by the flash Bachelor, was overpowered with civilities the rest of the evening.

When the dance was ended, Bill very politely shook hands with Paul, and took an early opportunity of introducing him to some of the most “noted characters” of the town. Among these was the smart Mr. Ad-fair, the insinuating Henry Finch, the merry Jack Hookey, the knowing Charles Trywit, and various others equally noted for their skill in living handsomely upon their own brains, and the personals of other people. To say truth, Paul, who at that time was an honest lad, was less charmed than he had anticipated by the conversation of these cavaliers of industry. He was more pleased with the clever, though self-sufficient remarks of a gentleman with a remarkably fine head of hair, and whom we would more impressively than the rest introduce to our reader, under the appellation of Mr. Edward Pepper, generally termed Long Ned. As this worthy was destined afterwards to be an intimate associate of Paul, our main reason for attending the hop at Bachelor Bill's is to note, as the importance of the event deserves, the epoch of the commencement of their acquaintance.

Long Ned and Paul happened to sit

next to each other at supper, and they conversed together so amicably that Paul, in the hospitality of his heart, expressed a hope that "he should see Mr. Pepper at the Mug!"

"Mug—Mug!" repeated Pepper, half shutting his eyes with the air of a dandy about to be impertinent; "Ah—the name of a chapel—is it not? There's a sect called the Muggletonians, I think!"

"As to that," said Paul, colouring at this insinuation against the Mug, "Mrs. Lobkins has no more religion than her betters; but the Mug is a very excellent house, and frequented by the best possible company."

"Don't doubt it!" said Ned. "Remember now that I was once there, and saw one Dummy Dunnaker—is not that the name? I recollect some years ago, when I first came out, that Dummie and I had an adventure together;—to tell you the truth, it was not the sort of thing I would do now. But, would you believe it, Mr. Paul? this pitiful fellow was quite rude to me the only time I ever met him since;—that is to say, the only time I ever entered the Mug. I have no notion of such airs in a merchant—a merchant of rags! Those commercial fellows are getting quite insufferable!"

"You surprise me!" said Paul. "Poor Dummie is the last man to be rude. He is as civil a creature as ever lived."

"Or sold a rag!" said Ned. "Possibly! Don't doubt his amiable qualities in the least. Pass the bingo, my good fellow. Stupid stuff, this dancing!"

"Devilish stupid!" echoed Harry Finish, across the table. "Suppose we adjourn to Fish Lane, and rattle the ivories! What say you, Mr. Lobkins?"

Afraid of the "ton's stern laugh, which scarce the proud philosopher can scorn," and not being very partial to dancing, Paul assented to the pro-

position; and a little party, consisting of Harry Finish, Alfie, Long Ned, and Mr. Hookey, adjourned to Fish Lane, where there was a club, celebrated among men who live by their wits, at which "lush" and "bacey" were gratuitously apportioned in the most magnificent manner. Here the evening passed away very delightfully, and Paul went home without a "brad" in his pocket.

From that time, Paul's visits to Fish Lane became unfortunately regular; and in a very short period, we grieve to say, Paul became that distinguished character—a gentleman of three outs—"out of pocket, out of elbows, and out of credit." The only two persons whom he found willing to accommodate him with a slight loan, as the advertisements signed X. Y. have it, were Mr. Dummie Dunnaker and Mr. Pepper, surnamed the Long. The latter, however, while he obliged the heir to the Mug, never condescended to enter that noted place of resort; and the former, whenever he good-naturedly opened his purse strings, did it with a hearty caution to shun the acquaintance of Long Ned. "A parson," said Dummie, "of very dangerous morals, and not by no manner of means a fit associate for a young gemman of cracker like little Paul!" So earnest was this caution, and so especially pointed at Long Ned,—although the company of Mr. Alfie or Mr. Finish might be said to be no less prejudicial,—that it is probable that stately fastidiousness of manner, which Lord Normanby rightly observes, in one of his excellent novels, makes so many enemies in the world, and which sometimes characterised the behaviour of Long Ned, especially towards the men of commerce, was a main reason why Dummie was so acutely and peculiarly alive to the immoralities of that lengthy gentleman. At the same time we must observe, that

when Paul, remembering what Pepper had said respecting his early adventure with Mr. Dunnaker, repeated it to the merchant, Dummie could not conceal a certain confusion, though he merely remarked, with a sort of laugh, that it was not worth speaking about; and it appeared evident to Paul that something unpleasant to the man of rags, which was not shared by the unconscious Pepper, lurked in the reminiscence of their past acquaintance. However, the circumstance glided from Paul's attention the moment afterwards; and he said, we are concerned to say, equally little heed to the cautions against Ned with which Dummie regaled him.

Perhaps (for we must now direct a glance towards his domestic concerns) one great cause which drove Paul to Fish Lane was the uncomfortable life he led at home. For though Mrs. Lockins was extremely fond of her *parlour*, yet she was possessed, as her customers emphatically remarked, "of the devil's own temper," and her native coarseness never having been softened by those pictures of gay society which had, in many a novel and comic farce, refined the temperament of the romantic Paul, her manner of venting her maternal reproaches was certainly not a little revolting to a lad of some delicacy of feeling. Indeed, it often occurred to him to leave her house altogether, and seek his fortunes alone, after the manner of the ingenious Gil Blas, or the enterprising Roderick Random; and this idea, though conquered and reconquered, gradually swelled and increased at his heart, even as swellbath that hairy ball found in the stomach of some suffering heifer after its decease. Among these projects of enterprise, the reader will hereafter notice, that an early vision of the Green Forest Cave, in which "urien was accus-

tomed, with a friend, a haan, and a wife, to console himself, flitted across his mind. At this time he did not, perhaps, incline to the mode of life practised by the hero of the roads; but he certainly clung not the less fondly to the notion of the cave.

The melancholy flow of our hero's life was now, however, about to be diverted by an unexpected turn, and the crude thoughts of boyhood to burst, "like Ghan's Giant Palm," into the fruit of a manly resolution.

Among the prominent features of Mrs. Lockins' mind was a sovereign contempt for the unsuccessful;—the imprudence and ill-luck of Paul occasioned her as much scorn as compassion. And when, for the third time within a week, he stood, with a rueful visage and with vacant pockets, by the dame's great chair, requesting an additional supply, the tides of her wrath swelled into overflow.

"Look you, my kinskin cove," said she,—and in order to give peculiar dignity to her aspect, she put on while she spoke a huge pair of tin spectacles,—"if so be as how you goes for to think as how I shall go for to supply your wondrous necessities, you will find yourself planted in Quaver Street. Blow me tight, if I gives you another mag."

"But I owe Long Ned a guinea," said Paul; "and Dummie Dunnaker lent me three crowns. It ill becomes your hair apparent, my dear dame, to fight shy of his debts of honour."

"Tarradiddle, don't think for to wheedle me with your dabs and your honour," said the dame in a passion. "Long Ned is as long in the furks (fingers) as he is in the back; may Old Harry fly off with him! And as for Dummie Dunnaker, I wonder how you brought up such a swell, and blust with the wery best of head-collars, can think of putting up with such vulgar associates? I tells you what, Paul, you'll please to break

with them, smack and at once, or devil a brad you'll ever get from Peg Lobkins." So saying, the old lady turned round in her chair, and helped herself to a pipe of tobacco.

Paul walked twice up and down the apartment, and at last stopped opposite the dame's chair: he was a youth of high spirit, and though he was warm-hearted, and had a love for Mrs. Lobkins, which her care and affection for him well deserved, yet he was rough in temper, and not constantly smooth in speech: it is true that his heart smote him afterwards, whenever he had said any thing to annoy Mrs. Lobkins: and he was always the first to seek a reconciliation; but warm words produce cold respect, and sorrow for the past is not always efficacious in amending the future. Paul then, puffed up with the vanity of his genteel education, and the friendship of Long Ned (who went to Ramslagh, and wore silver clocked stockings), stopped opposite to Mrs. Lobkins' chair, and said with great solemnity—

"Mr. Pepper, madam, says very properly that I must have money to support myself like a gentleman: and as you won't give it me, I am determined, with many thanks for your past favours, to throw myself on the world, and seek my fortune."

If Paul was of no oily and bland temper, dame Margaret Lobkins, it has been seen, had no advantage on that score:—we dare say the reader has observed that nothing so enrages persons on whom one depends as any expressed determination of seeking independence. Gazing, therefore, for one moment at the open but resolute countenance of Paul, while all the blood of her veins seemed gathering in fire and scarlet to her enlarging cheeks, Dame Lobkins said—

"Ifeaks, Master Pride-in-duds! seek your fortune yourself, will you! This comes of my bringing you up,

and letting you eat the bread of idleness and charity, you toad of a thousand! Take that and be d——d to you!" and, suiting the action to the word, the tube which she had withdrawn from her mouth, in order to utter her gentle rebuke, whizzed through the air, grazed Paul's cheek, and finished its earthly career by coming in violent contact with the right eye of Dummie Dunnaker, who at that exact moment entered the room.

Paul had winced for a moment to avoid the missile,—in the next he stood perfectly upright; his cheeks glowed, his chest swelled; and the entrance of Dummie Dunnaker who was thus made the spectator of the affront he had received, stirred his blood into a deeper anger and a more bitter self-humiliation:—all his former resolutions of departure—all the hard words, the coarse allusions, the practical insults he had at any time received, rushed upon him at once. He merely cast one look at the old woman, whose rage was now half subsided, and turned slowly and in silence to the door.

There is often something alarming in an occurrence, merely because it is that which we least expect: the astute Mrs. Lobkins, remembering the hardy temper and fiery passions of Paul, had expected some burst of rage, some vehement reply; and when she caught with one wandering eye his parting look, and saw him turn so passively and mutely to the door, her heart misgave her, she raised herself from her chair, and made towards him. Unhappily for her chance of reconciliation, she had that day quaffed more copiously of the bowl than usual, and the signs of intoxication visible in her uncertain gait, her meaningless eye, her vacant leer, her ruby cheek, all inspired Paul with feelings which, at the moment, converted resentment into something

very much like aversion. He sprang from her grasp to the threshold. "Where be you going, you imp of the world!" cried the dame. "Get in with you, and say no more on the matter; be a bobcull—drop the lilies, and you shall have the blunt!"

But Paul heeded not this invitation.

"I will eat the bread of idleness and charity no longer," said he, sullenly. "Good by,—and if ever I can pay you what I have cost you, I will!"

He turned away as he spoke; and the dame, kindling with resentment at his unseemly return to her proffered kindness, hallooed after him, and bade that dark coloured gentle man who keeps the *fire office* below, go along with him.

Swelling with anger, pride, shame, and a half-joyous feeling of emancipated independence, Paul walked on he knew not whether, with his head in the air, and his legs marshalling themselves into a military gait of defiance. He had not proceeded far, before he heard his name uttered behind him,—he turned, and saw the rufous face of Dummie Dunnaker.

Very inoffensively had that respectable person been employed during the last part of the scene we have described, in caressing his afflicted eye, and muttering philosophical observations on the danger incurred by all those who are acquainted with ladies of a choleric temperament; when Mrs. Lobbins, turning round after Paul's departure, and seeing the pitiful person of that Dummie Dunnaker, whose name she remembered Paul had mentioned in his opening speech, and whom, therefore, with an mingled confusion of ideas, she considered a party in the late dispute, exhausted upon him all that rage which it was necessary for her comfort that she should unburthen some where.

She seized the little man by the collar—the tenderest of all places in

gentlemen similarly circumstanced with regard to the ways of life, and giving him a blow, which took effect on his other and hitherto undamaged eye, cried out, "I'll teach you, you blood-sucker (*i. e.* parasite), to sponge upon those as has expectations! I'll teach you to cozen the hair of the Mug, you snivelling, whey-faced ghost of a farthing rushlight! What! you'll lend my Paul three crowns, will you; when you knows as how you told me you could not pay me a pitiful tizzy! Oh, you're a queer one I warrants; but you won't queer Margery Lobbins. Out of my ken, you cur of the mange!—out of my ken; and if ever I claps my sees on you again, or if ever I knows as how you makes a flat of my Paul, blow me tight, but I'll weave you a hempen collar: I'll hang you, you dog, I will. What! you will answer me, will you!—O you viper, budge, and begone!"

It was in vain that Dummie protested his innocence. A violent *coup de pied* broke off all further parance. He made a clear house of the Mug; and the landlady thereof, tottering back to her elbow-chair, sought out another pipe, and, like all imaginative persons when the world goes wrong with them, consoled herself for the absence of realities by the creations of smoke.

Meanwhile, Dummie Dunnaker, muttering and murmuring latter fancies, overtook Paul, and accused that youth of having been the occasion of the injuries he had just undergone. Paul was not at that moment in the humour best adapted for the patient bearing of accusations; he answered Mr. Dunnaker very shortly; and that respectable individual, still smarting under his bruises, replied with equal tartness. Words grew high, and at length, Paul, desirous of concluding the conference, clenched his fist, and told the redoubted Dummie that he

would "knock him down." There is something peculiarly harsh and stunning in those three hard, winey, sturdy, stubborn monosyllables. Their very sound makes you double your fist—if you are a hero; or your pace—if you are a peaceable man. They produced an instant effect upon Dummie Dunnaker, aided as they were by the effect of an athletic and youthful figure, already fast approaching to the height of six feet,—a flushed cheek, and an eye that bespoke both passion and resolution. The rag-merchant's voice sunk at once, and with the countenance of a wronged Cassius he thimpered forth,—

"Knock me down!—O leetle Paul, vot vicked vhidz are those! Vot! Dummie Dunnaker as has dandled you on his knee mony's a time and oft! Vy, the cove's art is as ard as junk, and as proud as a gardener's dog with a nosegay tied to his tail." This pathetic remonstrance softened Paul's anger.

"Well, Dummie," said he, laughing, "I did not mean to hurt you, and there's an end of it; and I am very sorry for the dame's ill conduct; and so I wish you a good morning."

"Vy, vere be you trotting so, leetle Paul!" said Dummie, grasping him by the tail of the coat.

"The deuce a bit I know," answered our hero; "but I think I sha'll drop a call on Long Ned."

"Avast there!" said Dummie, speaking under his breath; if so be as you von't blab, I'll tell you a bit of a secret. I heered as ow Long Ned started for Hampshire this werry morning on a toby consarn!"*

"Ha!" said Paul, "then hang me if I know what to do!" As he uttered these words, a more thorough sense of his destitution (if he persevered in leaving the Mug) than he had hitherto felt rushed upon him; for Paul had

designed for a while to throw himself on the hospitality of his Patagonian friend, and now that he found that friend was absent from London, and on so dangerous an expedition, he was a little puzzled what to do with that treasure of intellect and wisdom which he carried about upon his legs. Already he had acquired sufficient penetration (for Charles Trywit and Harry Finish were excellent masters for initiating a man into the knowledge of the world) to perceive that a person, however admirable may be his qualities, does not readily find a welcome without a penny in his pocket. In the neighbourhood of Thames Court he had, indeed, many acquaintances; but the fineness of his language, acquired from his education, and the elegance of his air, in which he attempted to blend, in happy association, the gallant effrontery of Mr. Long Ned with the graceful negligence of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson, had made him many enemies among those acquaintances; and he was not willing,—so great was our hero's pride,—to throw himself on the chance of their welcome, or to publish, as it were, his exiled and crest-fallen state. As for those boon companions who had assisted him in making a wilderness of his pockets, he had already found, that that was the only species of assistance which they were willing to render him: in a word, he could not for the life of him conjecture in what quarter he should find the benefits of bed and board. While he stood with his finger to his lip, undecided and musing, but fully resolved at least on one thing—not to return to the Mug,—little Dummie, who was a good-natured fellow at the bottom, peered up in his face, and said, "Vy, Paul, my kid, you looks down in the chops: cheer up, care killed a cat!"

Observing that this appropriate and encouraging fact of natural history

* Highway expedition.

did not lessen the cloud upon Paul's brow, the acute Dammie Dunnaker proceeded at once to the grand passages for all evils, in his own profound estimation.

"Paul, my ben cull," said he, with a knowing wink, and nudging the young gentleman in the left side, "vat do you say to a drop o' blue ruin? or, as you likes to be conish gentles, I desan't care if I sports you a glass of port?" While Dunnaker was uttering this invitation, a sudden remembrance flashed across Paul: he bethought him at once of Mac Grawler; and he resolved forthwith to repair to the abode of that illustrious sage, and petition at least for accommodation for the approaching night. So soon as he had come to this determination, he shook off the grasp of the amiable Dammie, and refusing, with many thanks, his hospitable invitation, requested him to abstract from the dame's house, and lodge within his own, until called for, such articles of linen and clothing as belonged to Paul, and could easily be laid hold of, during one of the matron's evening *siestas*, by the shrewd Dunnaker. The merchant promised that the commission should be speedily executed; and Paul, shaking hands with him, proceeded to the mansion of Mac Grawler.

We must now go back somewhat in the natural course of our narrative, and observe, that among the minor causes which had conspired with the great one of gambling to bring our excellent Paul to his present situation, was his intimacy with Mac Grawler; for when Paul's increasing years and roving habits had put an end to the sage's instructions, there was thereby lopped off from the preceptor's finances the weekly sum of two shillings and sixpence, as well as the freedom of the dame's cellar and larder; and as, in the reaction of feeling, and the perverse course of human affairs,

people generally repent the most of those actions once the most ardently incurred; so poor Mrs. Lobkins, imagining that Paul's irregularities were entirely owing to the knowledge he had acquired from Mac Grawler's instructions, grievously upbraided herself for her former folly, in seeking for a superior education for her *protégé*; nay, she even vented upon the sacred head of Mac Grawler himself her dissatisfaction at the results of his instructions. In like manner, when a man who can spell comes to be hanged, the anti-educationists accuse the spelling-book of his murder. High words between the admirer of ignorant innocence and the propagator of intellectual science ensued, which ended in Mac Grawler's final expulsion from the Mug.

There are some young gentlemen of the present day addicted to the adoption of Lord Byron's poetry, with the alteration of new rhymes, who are pleased graciously to inform us, that they are born to be the ruin of all those who love them: an interesting fact, doubtless, but which they might as well keep to themselves. It would seem, by the contents of this chapter, as if the same misfortune were destined to Paul. The exile of Mac Grawler,—the insults offered to Dammie Dunnaker,—alike occasioned by him, appear to sanction that opinion. Unfortunately, though Paul was a poet, he was not much of a sentimentalist; and he has never given us the edifying ravings of his remorse on these subjects. But Mac Grawler, like Dunnaker, was resolved that our hero should perceive the curse of his fatality; and as he still retained some influence over the mind of his quondam pupil, his accusations against Paul, as the origin of his banishment, were attended with a greater success than were the complaints of Dammie Dunnaker on a similar calamity. Paul, who, like

most people who are good for nothing, had an excellent heart, was exceedingly grieved at Mac Grawler's banishment on his account: and he endeavoured to atone for it by such pecuniary consolations as he was enabled to offer. These Mac Grawler (purely, we may suppose, from a benevolent desire to lessen the boy's remorse) scrupled not to accept; and thus, so similar often are the effects of virtue and of vice, the exemplary Mac Grawler conspired with the unprincipled Long Ned and the heartless Henry Finish, in producing that unenviable state of vanity which now saddened over the pockets of Paul.

As our hero was slowly walking towards the sage's abode, depending on his gratitude and friendship for a temporary shelter, one of those lightning flashes of thought which often illumine the profoundest abyss of affliction darted across his mind.

Recalling the image of the critic, he remembered that he had seen that ornament of "The Asinorum" receive sundry sums for his critical incubations.

"Why," said Paul, seizing on that fact, and stopping short in the street, "why should I not turn critic myself?"

The only person to whom one ever puts a question with a tolerable certainty of receiving a satisfactory answer is one's self. The moment Paul started this luminous suggestion, it appeared to him that he had discovered the mines of Potosi. Burning with impatience to discuss with the great Mac Grawler the feasibility of his project, he quickened his pace almost into a run, and in a very few minutes, having only overthrown one chimney-sweeper and two applewomen by the way, he arrived at the sage's door.

CHAPTER V.

"Ye realms yet unreveal'd to human sight!
Ye canes athwart the hapless hands that write!
Ye critic chiefs—permit me to relate
The mystic wonders of your silent state!"

Vincent, *Æt.* b. vi.

FORTUNE had smiled upon Mr. Mac Grawler since he first undertook the tuition of Mrs. Lobkins' *protégé*. He now inhabited a second-floor, and defied the sheriff and his evil spirits. It was at the dusk of evening that Paul found him at home and alone.

Before the mighty man stood a pot of London porter; a candle, with an unregarded wick, shed its solitary light upon his labours; and an infant cat played sportively at his learned feet, beguiling the weary moments with the remnants of the *giral cap*.

wherewith, instead of laurel, the critic had hitherto nightly adorned his brow.

So soon as Mac Grawler, piercing through the gloomy mist which hung about the chamber, perceived the person of the intruder, a frown settled upon his brow.

"Have I not told you, youngster!" he growled, "never to enter a gentleman's room without knocking? I tell you, sir, that manners are no less essential to human happiness than virtue: wherefore, never disturb a

gentleman in his avocations, and sit yourself down without molesting the cat!"

Paul, who knew that his respected tutor disliked any one to trace the course of the wonderful spirit which he infused into his critical compositions, affected not to perceive the pewter Hippocrane, and with many apologies for his want of preparatory politeness, seated himself as directed. It was then that the following edifying conversation ensued.

"The ancients," quoth Paul, "were very great men, Mr. Mac Grawler."

"They were so, sir," returned the critic; "we make it a rule in our profession to assert that fact!"

"But, sir," said Paul, "they were wrong now and then."

"Never Ignoramus; never!"

"They professed poverty, Mr. Mac Grawler," said Paul, with a sigh.

"Hem!" quoth the critic, a little staggered, but presently recovering his characteristic composure, he observed,—

"It is true, Paul; but that was the poverty of other people."

There was a slight pause. "Criticism," remarked Paul, "must be a most difficult art."

"A hem! And what art is there, sir, that is not difficult—at least, to become master of?"

"True," sighed Paul; "or else——"

"Or else what, boy?" repeated Mr. Mac Grawler, seeing that Paul hesitated, either from fear of his superior knowledge, as the critic's vanity suggested, or from what was equally likely, want of a word to express his meaning.

"Why, I was thinking, sir," said Paul, with that desperate courage which gives a distinct and loud intonation to the voice of all who act, or think they act, their fate upon a cast. "I was thinking that I should like to become a critic myself!"

"W—h—o—w!" whistled Mac Grawler, elevating his eyebrows;

"w—h—o—w! great ends have come of less beginnings!"

Encouraging as this assertion was, coming as it did from the lips of so great a man and so great a critic, at the very moment too when nothing short of an anathema against arrogance and presumption was expected to issue from those portals of wisdom; yet, such is the fallacy of all human hopes, that Paul's of a surety would have been a little less elated, had he, at the same time his ears drank in the balm of these gracious words, been able to have dived into the source whence they emanated.

"Know thyself!" was a precept the sage Mac Grawler had endeavoured to obey: consequently the result of his obedience was, that even by himself he was better known than trusted. Whatever he might appear to others, he had in reality no vain faith in the infallibility of his own talents and resources; as well might a butcher deem himself a perfect anatomist from the frequent amputation of legs of mutton, as the critic of "The Assimism" have laid "the flattering unction to his soul," that he was really skilled in the art of criticism, or even acquainted with one of its commonest rules, because he could with all speed cut up and disjoint any work, from the smallest to the greatest, from the most superficial to the most superior; and thus it was that he never had the want of candour to decry himself as to his own talents. Paul's wish, therefore, was no sooner expressed, than a vague but golden scheme of future profit illumined the brain of Mac Grawler—in a word, he resolved that Paul should henceforward share the labour of his critiques; and that he, Mac Grawler, should receive the whole profits in return for the honour thereby conferred on his confidant.

Looking, therefore, at our hero

with a benignant air, Mr. Mac Grawler thus continued:—

"Yes, I repeat,—great ends have come from less beginnings!—Rome was not built in a day,—and I, Paul, I myself was not always the editor of '*The Asinreum*.' You say wisely, criticism is a great science—a very great science, and it may be divided into three branches; viz. 'to tickle, to slash, and to plaster.' In each of these three, I believe without vanity, I am a profound adept! I will initiate you into all. Your labours shall begin this very evening. I have three works on my table, they must be despatched by to-morrow night; I will take the most arduous, I abandon to you the others. The three consist of a Romance, an Epic in twelve books, and an Inquiry into the Human Mind, in three volumes; I, Paul, will tickle the Romance, you this very evening shall plaster the Epic and slash the Inquiry!"

"Heavens, Mr. Mac Grawler!" cried Paul, in consternation, "what do you mean? I should never be able to read an epic in twelve books, and I should fall asleep in the first page of the Inquiry. No, no, leave me the romance, and take the other two under your own protection!"

Although great genius is always benevolent, Mr. Mac Grawler could not restrain a smile of ineffable contempt at the simplicity of his pupil.

"Know, young gentleman," said he solemnly, "that the romance in question must be tickled: it is not given to raw beginners to conquer that great mystery of our science."

"Before we proceed farther, explain the words of the art," said Paul, impatiently.

"Listen, then," rejoined Mac Grawler; and as he spoke the candle cast an awful glimmering on his countenance. "To slash is, speaking grammatically, to employ the accusative,

or accusing case; you must cut up your book right and left, top and bottom, root and branch. To plaster a book, is to employ the dative, or giving case, and you must bestow on the work all the superlatives in the language; you must lay on your praise thick and thin, and not leave a crevice untrowelled. But to tickle, sir, is a comprehensive word, and it comprises all the infinite varieties that fill the interval between slashing and plastering. This is the nicety of the art, and you can only acquire it by practice; a few examples will suffice to give you an idea of its delicacy.

"We will begin with the encouraging tickle. 'Although this work is full of faults; though the characters are unnatural, the plot utterly improbable, the thoughts hackneyed, and the style ungrammatical; yet we would by no means discourage the author from proceeding, and in the meanwhile we confidently recommend his work to the attention of the reading public.'

"Take now, the advising tickle.

"There is a good deal of merit in these little volumes, although we must regret the evident haste in which they were written. The author might do better—we recommend him a study of the best writers,'—then conclude by a Latin quotation, which you may take from one of the mottoes in the *Spectator*.

"Now, young gentleman, for a specimen of the metaphorical tickle.

"We beg this poetical aspirant to remember the fate of Pyrenæus, who, attempting to pursue the Muses, forgot that he had not the wings of the goddesses, flung himself from the loftiest ascent he could reach, and perished."

"This you see, Paul, is a loftier and more erudite sort of tickle, and may be reserved for one of the Quarterly Reviews. Never throw away a simile unnecessarily.

"Now for a sample of the facetious tickle."

"Mr. — has obtained a considerable reputation! Some fine ladies think him a great philosopher, and he has been praised in our hearing by some Cambridge Fellows, for his knowledge of fashionable society."

"For this sort of tickle we generally use the dullest of our tribe, and I have selected the foregoing example from the criticisms of a distinguished writer in 'The Asineum,' whom we call *par excellence*, the Ass."

"There is a variety of other tickles, the familiar, the vulgar, the polite, the good-natured, the bitter, but in general all tickles may be supposed to signify, however disguised, one or other of these meanings:—'This book would be exceedingly good if it were not exceedingly bad,'—or, 'This book would be exceedingly bad if it were not exceedingly good.'"

"You have now, Paul, a general idea of the superior art required by the tickle!"

Our hero signified his assent by a sort of hysterical sound between a laugh and a groan. Mac Grawler continued—

"There is another grand difficulty attendant on this class of criticism—it is generally requisite to read a few pages of the work; because we seldom tickle without extracting, and it requires some judgment to make the context agree with the extract, but it is not often necessary to extract when you slash or when you plaster; when you slash, it is better in general to conclude with—"

"After what we have said, it is unnecessary to add that we cannot offend the taste of our readers by any quotation from this execrable trash." And when you plaster, you may wind up with, 'We regret that our limits will not allow us to give any extracts from this wonderful and unrivalled work.

We must refer our readers to the book itself.'

"And now, sir, I think I have given you a sufficient outline of the noble science of Sculiger and Mac Grawler. Doubtless you are reconciled to the task I have allotted you, and while I tickle the Romance, you will slash the Inquiry and plaster the Epic!"

"I will do my best, sir!" said Paul, with that modest yet noble simplicity which becomes the virtuously ambitious;—and Mac Grawler forthwith gave him pen and paper, and set him down to his undertaking.

He had the good fortune to please Mac Grawler, who, after having made a few corrections in style, declared he evinced a peculiar genius in that branch of composition. And then it was that Paul, made conceited by praise, said, looking contemptuously in the face of his preceptor, and swinging his legs to and fro,—

"And what, sir, shall I receive for the plastered Epic and the slashed Inquiry?" As the face of the school-boy who, when guessing, as he thinks rightly, at the meaning of some mysterious word in Cornelius Nepos, receiveth not the sugared epithet of praise, but a sudden stroke across the *os lacrimarum*,* even so, blank, puzzled, and thunder-stricken, waxed the face of Mr. Mac Grawler, at the abrupt and astounding audacity of Paul.

"Resolve!" he repeated, "resolve! — Why, you impudent, ungrateful puppy, would you steal the bread from your old master? If I can obtain for your crude articles an admission into the illustrious pages of 'The Asineum,' will you not be sufficiently paid, sir, by the honour? Answer me that. Another man, young gentleman, would have charged you a premium for his instructions;—and here have I, in one lesson, imparted to you

* Face or shoulders.

all the mysteries of the science, and for nothing ! And you talk to me of 'receive !'—'receive !' Young gentleman, in the words of the immortal bard, 'I would as lief you had talked to me of ratabane !' "

"In fine, then, Mr. Mac Grawler, I shall get nothing for my trouble ! " said Paul.

"To be sure not, sir ; the very best writer in 'The Asineum' only gets three shillings an article ! " Almost more than he deserves, the critic might have added ; for he who writes for nobody should receive nothing !

"Then, sir," quoth the mercenary Paul profanely, and rising, he kicked with one kick, the cat, the Epic, and the Inquiry to the other end of the room ; "Then, sir, you may all go to the devil ! "

We do not, O gentle reader ! seek to excuse this hasty anathema :—the habits of childhood will sometimes break forth despite of the after blessings of education. And we set not up Paul for thine imitation as that model of virtue and of wisdom which we design thee to discover in Mac Grawler.

When that great critic perceived Paul had risen and was retreating in high dudgeon towards the door, he rose also, and repeating Paul's last words, said, "'Go to the devil ! ' Not so quick, young gentleman,—*festina lente*,—all in good time. What though I did, astonished at your premature request, say that you should receive nothing ; yet my great love for you may induce me to bestir myself on your behalf. 'The Asineum,' it is true, only gives three shillings an article in general ; but I am its editor, and will intercede with the proprietors on your behalf. Yes—yes. I will see what is to be done. Stop a bit, my boy."

Paul, though very irascible, was easily pacified. he reseated himself, and, taking Mac Grawler's hand, said,—

"Forgive me for my petulance, my dear sir ; but, to tell you the honest truth, I am very low in the world just at present, and must get money in some way or another : in short, I must either pick pockets or write (not gratuitously) for 'The Asineum.' "

And, without farther preliminary, Paul related his present circumstances to the critic ; declared his determination not to return to the Mug ; and requested, at least, from the friendship of his old preceptor the accommodation of shelter for that night.

Mac Grawler was exceedingly disconcerted at hearing so bad an account of his pupil's finances as well as prospects ; for he had secretly intended to regale himself that evening with a bowl of punch, for which he purposed that Paul should pay ; but as he knew the quickness of parts possessed by the young gentleman, as also the great affection entertained for him by Mrs. Lobkina, who, in all probability, would solicit his return the next day, he thought it not unlikely that Paul would enjoy the same good fortune as that presiding over his feline companion, which, though it had just been kicked to the other end of the apartment, was now resuming its former occupation, unhurt, and no less merrily than before. He, therefore, thought it would be imprudent to discard his quondam pupil, despite of his present poverty ; and, moreover, although the first happy project of pocketing all the profits derivable from Paul's industry was now abandoned, he still perceived great facility in pocketing a part of the same receipts. He therefore answered Paul very warmly, that he fully sympathised with him in his present melancholy situation ; that, so far as he was concerned, he would share his last *shilling* with his beloved pupil, but that he regretted at that moment he had only eleven-pence halfpenny in his pocket ; that he would, however, exert himself

to the utmost in procuring an opening for Paul's literary genius; and that if Paul liked to take the slashing and plastering part of the business on himself, he would willingly surrender it to him, and give him all the profits whatever they might be. *En attendant*, he regretted that a violent rheumatism prevented his giving up his own bed to his pupil, but that he might, with all the pleasure imaginable, sleep upon the rug before the fire. Paul was so affected by this kindness in the

worthy man, that, though not much addicted to the melting mood, he shed tears of gratitude; he insisted, however, on not receiving the whole reward of his labours; and at length it was settled, though with a noble reluctance on the part of Mac Grawler, that it should be equally shared between the critic and the critic's *protégé*; the half profits being reasonably awarded to Mac Grawler for his instructions and his recommendation.

CHAPTER VI.

"Bad events peep out of the tail of good purposes."

Bartholomew Fair.

It was not long before there was a visible improvement in the pages of "The Assemmum," the slashing part of that incomparable journal was suddenly renewed and carried on with a vigour and spirit which astonished the half-wild few who contributed to its animation. It was not difficult to see that a new editor had been enlisted in the service: there was something so fresh and hearty about the abuse, that it could never have proceeded from the earnest hostility of an old scholar. To be sure, a little ignorance of ordinary facts, and an awkward method of applying words to meanings which they never were meant to denote, were now and then distinguishable in the productions of the new Achilles; nevertheless, it was easy to attribute these peculiarities to an original turn of thinking; and the rise of the paper upon the appearance of a series of articles upon contemporary authors, written by this "eminent hand," was so remarkable, that fifty copies—a number perfectly unprecedented in the annals of "The Assemmum"—were absolutely sold in one

week: indeed, remembering the principle on which it was founded, one sturdy old writer declared, that the journal would soon do for itself and become popular. There was a remarkable peculiarity about the literary *debutant*, who signed himself "Nobilitas." He not only put old words to a new sense, but he used words which had never, among the general run of writers, been used before. This was especially remarkable in the application of hard names to authors. Once, in censuring a popular writer for pleasing the public, and thereby growing rich, the "eminent hand" ended with—"He who surreptitiously accumulates *banals** is, in fact, nothing better than a *bona fide*!"†

These unqualified words and recondite phrases imparted a great air of learning to the style of the new critic; and, from the unintelligible solemnity of his diction, it seemed doubtful whether he was a poet from Hackney, or a philosopher from Königsburg. At all events, the

* Money.

† Picked out.

viewer preserved his incognito, and, while his praises were rung at no less than three tea-tables, even glory appeared to him less delicious than disguise.

In this incognito, reader, thou hast already discovered Paul, and now, we have to delight thee with a piece of unexampled morality in the excellent Mac Grawler. That worthy Mentor, perceiving that there was an inherent turn for dissipation and extravagance in our hero, resolved magnanimously rather to bring upon himself the sins of treachery and malappropriation, than suffer his friend and former pupil to incur those of wastefulness and profusion. Contrary, therefore, to the agreement made with Paul, instead of giving that youth the half of those profits consequent on his brilliant lucubrations, he imparted to him only one fourth, and, with the utmost tenderness for Paul's salvation, applied the other three portions of the same to his own necessities. The best actions are, alas! often misconstrued in this world; and we are now about to record a remarkable instance of that melancholy truth.

One evening, Mac Grawler, having "moistened his virtue" in the same manner that the great Cato is said to have done, in the confusion which such a process sometimes occasions in the best regulated heads, gave Paul what appeared to him the outline of a certain article, which he wished to be slashingly filled up, but what in reality was the following note from the editor of a monthly periodical:—

"Sir,

"Understanding that my friend, Mr. —, proprietor of 'The Asinaum,' allows the very distinguished writer whom you have introduced to the literary world, and who signs himself 'Nobilitas,' only five shillings an article, I beg through you, to

tender him double that sum: the article required will be of an ordinary length.

"I am, sir, &c.

"———."

Now, that very morning, Mac Grawler had informed Paul of this offer, altering only, from the amiable motives we have already explained, the sum of ten shillings to that of four; and no sooner did Paul read the communication we have placed before the reader, than, instead of gratitude to Mac Grawler for his consideration of Paul's moral infirmities, he conceived against that gentleman the most bitter resentment. He did not, however, vent his feelings at once upon the Scotsman; indeed, at that moment, as the sage was in a deep sleep under the table, it would have been to no purpose had he unbridled his indignation. But he resolved without loss of time to quit the abode of the critic. "And, indeed," said he, soliloquising, "I am heartily tired of this life, and shall be very glad to seek some other employment. Fortunately, I have hoarded up five guineas and four shillings, and with that independence in my possession, since I have forsworn gambling, I cannot easily starve."

To this soliloquy succeeded a misanthropical revery upon the faithlessness of friends; and the meditation ended in Paul's making up a little bundle of such clothes, &c. as Dummie had succeeded in removing from the Mug, and which Paul had taken from the rag-merchant's abode one morning when Dummie was abroad.

When this easy task was concluded, Paul wrote a short and upbraiding note to his illustrious preceptor, and left it unsealed on the table. He then, upsetting the ink-bottle on Mac Grawler's sleeping countenance, departed from the house, and strolled away he cared not whither.

The evening was gradually closing

as Paul, chomping the end of his bitter fancies, found himself on London Bridge. He paused there, and, leaning over the bridge, gazed wistfully on the gloomy waters that rolled onward, caring not a minnow for the numerous charming young ladies who have thought proper to drown themselves in these merciless waves, thereby improving many a good mistress of an excellent housemaid or an invaluable cook, and many a treacherous Phœbe of letters beginning with "Parjural Villain," and ending with "Your affectionist but melancholly Molly."

While thus musing, he was suddenly accosted by a gentleman in boots and spurs, having a riding-whip in one hand, and the other hand stuck in the pocket of his inexpressibles. The hat of the gallant was gracefully and carefully put on, so as to derange as little as possible a profusion of dark curls, which, streaming with unguents, fell not only on either side of the face, but on the neck, and even the shoulders of the owner. The face was saturnine and strongly marked, but handsome and striking. There was a mixture of frippery and sternness in the expression, something between Madame Vestris and T. P. Cooke, or between "lovely Sally" and a "Captain bold of Halifax." The stature of this personage was remarkably tall, and his figure was stout, muscular, and well knit. In fine, to complete his portrait, and give our readers of the present day an exact idea of this hero of the past, we shall add that he was altogether that sort of gentleman one sees swaggering in the Burlington Arcade, with his hair and hat on one side, and a military cloak thrown over his shoulders;—or prodding in Regent Street, towards the evening, *whiskered and adorned*.

Laying his hand on the shoulder of our hero, this gentleman said, with an affected intonation of voice:—

"How dost, my fine fellow?—long

since I saw you!—darnsee, but you look the worse for wear. What hast thou been doing with thyself?"

"Ha!" cried our hero, returning the salutation of the stranger, "and is it Long Ned whom I behold? I am indeed glad to meet you; and I say, my friend, I hope what I heard of you is not true!"

"Hast!" said Long Ned, looking round fearfully, and sinking his voice,—"never talk of what you hear of gentlemen, except you wish to bring them to their last dying speech and confession. But come with me, my lad; there is a tavern hard by, and we may as well discuss matters over a pint of wine. You look cursed needy, to be sure, but I can tell Bill the waiter—famous fellow, that Bill—that you are one of my tenants, come to complain of my steward, who has just distrained you for rent, you dog!—No wonder you look so worn in the rigging. Come follow me. I can't walk *with* thee. It would look too like Northumberland House and the butcher's abode next door taking a stroll together."

"Really, Mr Pepper," said our hero, colouring, and by no means pleased with the ingenious comparison of his friend, "if you are ashamed of my clothes, which I own might be newer, I will not wound you with my —"

"Pooh! my lad—pooh!" cried Long Ned, interrupting him; "never take offence. I never do. I never take any thing but money,—except, indeed, watches. I don't mean to hurt your feelings;—all of us have been poor once. 'Gad, I remember when I had not a dud to my back, and now, you see me—yea, see me, Paul! But come, 'tis only through the streets you need separate from me. Keep a little behind—very little—that will do.—Ay, that will do," repeated Long Ned, muttering to himself, "they'll take him for a

tailor. It looks handsome nowadays to be so attended. It shows one *had credit once!*"

Meanwhile Paul, though by no means pleased with the contempt expressed for his personal appearance by his lengthy associate, and impressed with a keener sense than ever of the crimes of his coat and the vices of his other garment—"O breathe not its name!"—followed doggedly and sullenly the strutting steps of the coxcombical Mr. Pepper. That personage arrived at last at a small tavern, and, arresting a waiter who was running across the passage into the coffee room with a dish of hung-beef, demanded (no doubt from a pleasing anticipation of a similar pendulous catastrophe) a plate of the same excellent cheer, to be carried, in company with a bottle of port, into a private apartment. No sooner did he find himself alone with Paul, than, bursting into a loud laugh, Mr. Ned surveyed his comrade from head to foot, through an eye-glass which he wore fastened to his button-hole by a piece of blue riband.

"Well—'gad now," said he, stopping ever and anon, as if to laugh the more heartily—"stab my vitals, but you are a comical quiz; I wonder what the women would say, if they saw the dashing Edward Pepper, Esquire, walking arm in arm with thee at Ranelagh or Vauxhall? Nay, man, never be downcast; if I laugh at thee, it is only to make thee look a little merrier thyself. Why, thou lookest like a book of my grandfather's called Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*; and faith, a shabbier bound copy of it I never saw."

"These jests are a little hard," said Paul, struggling between anger and an attempt to smile; and then recollecting his late literary occupations, and the many extracts he had taken from *Gleanings of the Beehive Letters*, in order to impart elegance to his

criticisms, he threw out his hand theatrically, and spouted with a solemn face—

"Of all the griefs that harass the distressed, sure the most bitter is a scornful jest!"

"Well now, prithee forgive me," said Long Ned, composing his features; "and just tell me what you have been doing the last two months."

"Slashing and plastering!" said Paul, with conscious pride.

"Slashing and what! The boy's mad,—what do you mean, Paul?"

"In other words," said our hero, speaking very slowly, "know, O very Long Ned! that I have been critic to 'The Asineum.'"

If Paul's comrade laughed at first, he now laughed ten times more merrily than ever. He threw his length of limb upon a neighbouring sofa, and literally rolled with convulsive convulsions; nor did his risible emotions subside until the entrance of the hung-beef restored him to recollection. Seeing, then, that a cloud lowered over Paul's countenance, he went up to him, with something like gravity; begged his pardon for his want of politeness; and desired him to wash away all unkindness in a bumper of port. Paul, whose excellent dispositions we have before had occasion to remark, was not impervious to his friend's apologies. He assured Long Ned, that he quite forgave him for his ridicule of the high situation he (Paul) had enjoyed in the literary world; that it was the duty of a public censor to bear no malice; and that he should be very glad to take his share in the interment of the hung-beef.

The pair now set down to their repast, and Paul, who had fared but meagrely in that Temple of Athena over which Mac Grawler presided, did ample justice to the viands before him. By degrees, as he ate and drank, his heart opened to his companion; and, laying aside that Asi-

nance dignity which he had at first thought it incumbent on him to assume, he entertained Pepper with all the particulars of the life he had lately passed. He narrated to him his launch with Dame Lelkins; his acquaintance with Mac Grawler; the glory he had acquired, and the wrongs he had sustained; and he concluded, as now the second bottle made its appearance, by stating his desire of exchanging for some more active profession, that solitary career which he had so promisingly begun.

This last part of Paul's confessions secretly delighted the soul of Long Ned, for that experienced collector of the highways—Ned, was, indeed, of no less made a profession—had long fixed an eye upon our hero, as one whom he thought likely to be an honour to that enterprising calling which he espoused, and an useful assistant to himself. He had not, in his earlier acquaintance with Paul, when the youth was under the roof and the surveillance of the practised and wary Mrs. Lelkins, deemed it prudent to expose the exact nature of his own pursuits; and had contented himself by gradually ripening the mind and the finances of Paul into that state when the proposition of a leap from a hedge would not be likely greatly to revolt the person to whom it was made. He now thought that time near at hand; and, filling our hero's glass up to the brim, thus warmly addressed him—

"Courage, my friend!—your narration has given me a sensation pleasure. Let, mine be if it has not strengthened my favourite opinion,—that every thing is for the best. If it had not been for the meanness of that poor fellow, Mac Grawler, you might still be occupied with the paltry ambition of earning a few shillings a week, and vilifying a parcel of poor devils in the whited-waistcoat, with a hard name, whereas now, my good Paul,

I trust I shall be able to open to your genius a new career, in which genius are had for the asking,—in which you may wear fine clothes, and ogle the ladies at Ranelagh; and when you are tired of glory and liberty, Paul, why you have only to make your bow to an heiress, or a widow with a spanking jointure, and quit the hum of men like a Cincinnatus!"

Though Paul's perception into the abstruser branches of morals was not very acute,—and at that time the port wine had considerably confused the few notions he possessed upon "the beauty of virtue,"—yet he could not but perceive that Mr. Pepper's insinuated proposition was far from being one which the bench of bishops, or a synod of moralists, would conscientiously have approved; he consequently remained silent; and Long Ned, after a pause, continued—

"You know my genealogy, my good fellow!—I was the son of Lawyer Pepper, a shrewd old dog, but as hot as Calcutta; and the grandson of Sexton Pepper, a great author, who wrote verses on tombstones, and kept a stall of religious tracts in Carlisle. My grandfather, the sexton, was the best temper of the family; for all of us are a little inclined to be hot in the mouth. Well, my fine fellow, my father left me his blessing, and this devilish good head of hair. I lived for some years in my own resources. I found it a particularly inconvenient mode of life, and of late I have taken to live on the public. My father and grandfather did it before me, though in a different line. 'Tis the pleasantest plan in the world. Follow my example, and your out-should be as spruce as my own.—Master Paul, your health!"

"But O longest of mortals!" said Paul, refilling his glass, "though the public may allow you to eat your mutton off their backs for a short time, they will kick up at last, and

upset you and your lanquet : in other words, — pardon my metaphor, dear Ned, in remembrance of the part I have lately maintained in 'The Asiaticum,' that most magnificent and metaphorical of journals! — in other words, the police will nab thee at last ; and thou wilt have the distinguished fate, as thou already hast the distinguishing characteristic—of Absalom !”

“ You mean that I shall be hanged,” said Long Ned. “ That may or may not be ; but he who fears death never enjoys life. Consider, Paul, that though hanging is a bad fate, starving is a worse ; wherefore fill your glass, and let us drink to the health of that great donkey, the people, and may we never want saddles to ride it !”

“ To the great donkey,” cried Paul, tossing off his bumper ; “ may your (y)ears be as long ! But I own to you, my friend, that I cannot enter into your plans. And, as a token of my resolution, I shall drink no more, for my eyes already begin to dance in the air : and if I listen longer to your resistless eloquence, my feet may share the same fate !”

So saying, Paul rose ; nor could any entreaty, on the part of his entertainer, persuade him to resume his seat.

“ Nay, as you will,” said Pepper, affecting a *nonchalant* tone, and arranging his cravat before the glass. “ Nay, as you will. Ned Pepper requires no man's companionship against his liking : and if the noble spark of ambition be not in your bosom, 'tis no use spending my breath in blowing at what only existed in my too flattering opinion of your qualities. So, then, you propose to return to Mac Grawler, (the scurvy old cheat !) and pass the inglorious remainder of your life in the mangling of authors and the murder of grammar ? Go, my good fellow, go !

scribble again and for ever for Mac Grawler, and let him live upon thy brains, instead of suffering thy brains to go — ”

“ Hold !” cried Paul. “ Although I may have some scruples which prevent my adoption of that rising line of life you have proposed to me, yet you are very much mistaken if you imagine me so spiritless as any longer to subject myself to the frauds of that rascal Mac Grawler. No ! My present intention is to pay my old nurse a visit. It appears to me passing strange, that though I have left her so many weeks, she has never relented enough to track me out, which one would think would have been no difficult matter : and now you see that I am pretty well off, having five guineas and four shillings, all my own, and she can scarcely think I want her money, my heart melts to her, and I shall go and ask pardon for my haste !”

“ Pshaw ! sentimental,” cried Long Ned, a little alarmed at the thought of Paul's gliding from those clutches which he thought had now so firmly closed upon him. “ Why, you surely don't mean, after having once tasted the joys of independence, to go back to the boozing ken, and bear all Mother Lobkins' drunken tantarums ! Better have stayed with Mac Grawler of the two !”

“ You mistake me,” answered Paul ; “ I mean solely to make it up with her, and get her permission to see the world. My ultimate intention is—to travel.”

“ Right ;” cried Ned, “ on the high road—and on horseback, I hope !”

“ No, my Colossus of Roads ! No ! I am in doubt whether or not I shall enlist in a marching regiment, or (give me your advice on it) I fancy I have a great turn for the stage, ever since I saw Garrick in Richard. Shall I turn stroller ? It must be a merry life.”

"O, the devil!" cried Ned. "I myself once did Cassia in a barn, and every one swore I enacted the drunken scene to perfection; but you have no notion what a lamentable life it is to a man of any susceptibility. No, my friend. No! There is only one line in all the old plays worthy thy attention—

'*Toby is not to be.*'* that is the question."

I forget the rest!"

"Well!" said our hero, answering in the same jocular vein, "I confess, I have the actor's high ambition. It is astounding how my heart beat, when Richard cried out, '*Come bustle, bustle*.' Yes, Pepper avault—

'A thousand hearts are great within my bustle.'"

"Well, well," said Long Ned, stretching himself, "since you are so fond of the play, what say you to an extension thereof to-night? Garrick acts—"

"Done," cried Paul.

"Done!" echoed lazily Long Ned, rising with that *laissez air* which distinguishes the matured man of the world from the enthusiastic type. "Done! and we will adjourn afterwards to the White Horse."

"But stay a moment," said Paul. "If you remember, I owed you a guinea when I last saw you; here it is."

"Nonsense," exclaimed Long Ned, refusing the money, "nonsense! you want the money at present; pay me when you are richer. Nay, never be out about it; debts of honour are not paid now as they used to be. Whelps of the Fish Lane Club have changed all that. Well, well, if I must—"

And Long Ned, seeing that Paul insisted, pocketed the guinea. When this delicate matter had been arranged—

"Come," said Pepper, "come get

your hat; but bless me! I have forgotten one thing."

"What?"

"Why, my fine Paul, consider, the play is a bang-up sort of a place; look at your coat and your waistcoat, that's all!"

Our hero was struck dumb with this *argumentum ad hominem*. But Long Ned, after enjoying his perplexity, relieved him of it, by telling him that he knew of an honest tradesman who kept a ready-made shop, just by the theatre, and who would fit him out in a moment.

In fact Long Ned was as good as his word; he carried Paul to a tailor, who gave him for the sum of thirty shillings, half ready money, half on credit, a green coat with a tarnished gold lace, a pair of red inexpressibles, and a pepper-and-salt waistcoat; it is true, they were somewhat of the largest, for they had once belonged to no less a person than Long Ned himself; but Paul did not then regard those niceties of apparel, as he was subsequently taught to do by Gentleman George in personage hereafter to be introduced to our reader), and he went to the theatre, as well satisfied with himself as if he had been Mr. T——, or the Count de M——.

Our adventurers are now quietly seated in the theatre, and we shall not think it necessary to detail the performances they saw, or the observations they made. Long Ned was one of those superior beings of the road who would not for the world have condescended to appear any where but in the boxes, and, accordingly, the friends procured a couple of places in the dress-tier. In the next box to the one our adventurers adorned, they remained, more especially than the rest of the audience, a gentleman and a young lady seated next each other; the latter, who was about thirteen years old, was so uncommonly beautiful, that Paul, despite his dramatic

* The highway.

† Money.

enthusiasm, could scarcely divert his eyes from her countenance to the stage. Her hair, of a bright and fair auburn, hung in profuse ringlets about her neck, shedding a softer shade upon a complexion in which the roses seemed just budding, as it were, into blush. Her eyes large, blue, and rather languishing than brilliant, were curtained by the darkest lashes; her mouth seemed literally girt with smiles; so numberless were the dimples, that every time the full, ripe, dewy lips were parted, rose into sight; and the enchantment of the dimples was aided by two rows of teeth more dazzling than the richest pearls that ever glittered on a bride. But the chief charm of the face was its exceeding and touching air of innocence and girlish softness; you might have gazed for ever upon that first unspeakable bloom, that all untouched and stainless down, which seemed as if a very breath could mar it. Perhaps the face might have wanted animation; but, perhaps, also, it borrowed from that want an attraction; the repose of the features was so soft and gentle, that the eye wandered there with the same delight, and left it with the same reluctance, which it experiences in dwelling on or in quitting those hues which are found to harmonise the most with its vision. But while Paul was feeding his gaze on this young beauty, the keen glances of Long Ned had found an object no less fascinating in a large gold watch which the gentleman who accompanied the damsel ever and anon brought to his eye, as if he were waxing a little weary of the length of the pieces or the lingering progression of time.

"What a beautiful face!" whispered Paul.

"Is the face gold, then, as well as the back?" whispered Long Ned in return.

Our hero started, frowned,—and despite the gigantic stature of his comrade, told him, very angrily, to find some other subject for jesting. Ned in his turn stared, but made no reply.

Meanwhile Paul, though the lady was rather too young to fall in love with, began wondering what relationship her companion bore to her. Though the gentleman altogether was handsome, yet his features, and the whole character of his face, were widely different from those on which Paul gazed with such delight. He was not, seemingly, above five-and-forty, but his forehead was knit into many a line and furrow; and in his eyes the light, though searching, was more sober and staid than became his years. A disagreeable expression played about the mouth, and the shape of the face, which was long and thin, considerably detracted from the prepossessing effect of a handsome aquiline nose, fine teeth, and a dark, manly, though sallow complexion. There was a mingled air of shrewdness and distraction in the expression of his face. He seemed to pay very little attention to the play, or to any thing about him; but he testified very considerable alacrity when the play was over in putting her cloak around his young companion, and in threading their way through the thick crowd that the boxes were now pouring forth.

Paul and his companion silently, and each with very different motives from the other, followed them. They were now at the door of the theatre.

A servant stepped forward and informed the gentleman that his carriage was a few paces distant, but that it might be some time before it could drive up to the theatre.

"Can you walk to the carriage, my dear?" said the gentleman to his young charge; and she answering in

the affirmative, they both left the house, preceded by the servant.

"Come on!" said Long Ned, hastily, and walking in the same direction which the strangers had taken. Paul readily agreed; they soon overtook the strangers. Long Ned walked the nearest to the gentleman, and brushed by him in passing. Presently a voice cried, "Stop thief!" and Long Ned saying to Paul, "Shift for yourself—run!" dashed from our hero's side into the crowd and vanished in a twinkling. Before Paul could recover his amaze, he found himself suddenly seized by the collar; he turned abruptly, and saw the dark face of the young lady's companion.

"Kissed!" cried the gentleman, "my watch!"

"Watch!" repeated Paul, bewildered; and only for the sake of the young lady refraining from knocking down his accuser.—"Watch!"

"Ay, young man!" cried a fellow in a great coat, who now suddenly appeared on the other side of Paul, "this gentleman's watch, please your honour (addressing the complainant), I be a watch too,—shall I take up this chap?"

"By all means," cried the gentleman; "I would not have lost my watch for twice its value. I can swear I saw this fellow's companion snatch it from my side. The thief's gone; but we have at least the accomplice. I give him in strict charge to you, watchman; take the consequences if you let him escape."

The watchman answered, sullenly, that he did not want to be threatened, and he knew how to discharge his duty.

"Don't answer me, fellow!" said the gentleman haughtily; "do as I tell you!" And, after a little colloquy, Paul found himself suddenly marched off between two tall fellows, who looked prodigiously inclined to eat him. By this time he had recovered his surprise and dismay: he did not want the penetration to see that his companion had really committed the offence for which he was charged; and he also foresaw that the circumstance might be attended with disagreeable consequences to himself. Under all the features of the case, he thought that an attempt to escape would not be an imprudent proceeding on his part; accordingly, after moving a few paces very quietly and very passively, he watched his opportunity, wrenched himself from the gripe of the gentleman on his left, and brought the hand thus released against the cheek of the gentleman on his right with so hearty a good will as to cause him to relinquish his hold, and retreat several paces towards the areas in a slanting position. But that round-about sort of blow with the left fist is very unfavourable towards the preservation of a firm balance; and before Paul had recovered sufficiently to make an effectual "bolt," he was prostrated to the earth by a blow from the other and undamaged watchman, which utterly deprived him of his senses; and when he recovered those useful possessions (which a man may reasonably boast of losing, since it is only the minority who have them to lose), he found himself stretched on a bench in the watchhouse.

CHAPTER VII.

"Besirt with many a gallant slave,
 Apparel'd as becomes the brave,
 Old Gaffer sat in his divan :

• • • • •
 • • • • •

Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
 Will one day work me more annoy."

Bride of Abydos.

THE learned and ingenious John Schweighauser (a name facile to spell and mellifluous to pronounce) hath been pleased, in that *Appendix continuus particularum doctrinae de mente humanæ*, which closeth the volume of his *Opuscula Academica*, to observe (we translate from memory) that, "in the infinite variety of things which in the theatre of the world occur to a man's survey, or in some manner or another affect his body or his mind, by far the greater part are so contrived as to bring to him rather some sense of pleasure than of pain or discomfort." Assuming that this holds generally good in well-constituted frames, we point out a notable example in the case of the incarcerated Paul; for, although that youth was in no agreeable situation at the time present, and although nothing very encouraging smiled upon him from the prospects of the future, yet, as soon as he had recovered his consciousness, and given himself a rousing shake, he found an immediate source of pleasure in discovering, first, that several ladies and gentlemen bore him company in his imprisonment; and, secondly, in perceiving a huge jug of water within his reach, which, as his awaking sensation was that of burning thirst, he delightedly emptied at a draught. He then, stretching himself, looked around with a wistful earnestness, and discovered a back turned towards him, and recumbent

on the floor, which, at the very first glance, appeared to him familiar. "Surely," thought he, "I know that frieze coat, and the peculiar turn of those narrow shoulders." Thus soliloquising, he raised himself, and, putting out his leg, he gently kicked the reclining form. "Muttering strange oaths," the form turned round, and, raising itself upon that inhospitable part of the body in which the introduction of foreign feet is considered any thing but an honour, it fixed its dull blue eyes upon the face of the disturber of its slumbers, gradually opening them wider and wider, until they seemed to have enlarged themselves into proportions fit for the swallowing of the important truth that burst upon them, and then from the mouth of the creature issued—

"Queer my glims, if that ben't little Paul!"

"Ay, Dummie, here I am!—Not been long without being laid by the heels, you see!—Life is short; we must make the best use of our time!"

Upon this, Mr. Dunnaker (it was no less respectable a person) scrambled up from the floor, and seating himself on the bench beside Paul, said, in a pitying tone,—

"Vy, laus-a-me! if you ben't knocked o' the head!—Your pole's as bloody as Murphy's face* ven his throat's cut!"

* "Murphy's face," unlearned reader, appeareth, in Irish phrase, to mean "pig's head."

"Tis only the fortune of war, Dummie, and a mere trifle: the heads manufactured at Thames Court are not easily put out of order. But tell me, how come you here?"

"Vy, I had been lushing heavy vet——"

"Till you grew light in the head, eh? and fell into the kennel?"

"Yea."

"Mine is a worse business than that, I fear," and therewith Paul, in a lower voice, related to the trusty Dummie the train of accidents which had conducted him to his present asylum. Dummie's face elongated as he listened; however, when the narrative was over, he endeavoured such consolatory palliatives as occurred to him. He represented, first, the possibility that the gentleman might not take the trouble to appear; secondly, the certainty that no watch was found about Paul's person; thirdly, the fact that, even by the gentleman's confession, Paul had not been the actual offender; fourthly, if the worst came to the worst, what were a few weeks', or even months' imprisonment?

"Blow me tight!" said Dummie, "if it be n't as good a way of passing the time as a goose as is fond of snuggery need desire!"

This observation had no comfort for Paul, who resented, with all the maiden coyness of one to whom such unions are unfamiliar, from a matrimonial alliance with the *emigree* of the House of Correction. He rather trusted to another source for consolation. In a word, he encouraged the flattering belief, that Long Ned, finding that Paul had been caught instead of himself, would have the generosity to come forward and exonerate him from the charge. On hearing this idea to Dummie, that accomplished "man about town" could not for some time believe that any chaplain could be so thoroughly unacquainted with the world as seriously to entertain so

ridiculous a notion; and, indeed, it is somewhat remarkable that such a hope should ever have told its flattering tale to one brought up in the house of Mrs. Margaret Lockins. But Paul, we have seen, had formed many of his notions from books; and he had the same fine theories of your "moral rogue," that possess the minds of young patriots when they first leave college for the House of Commons, and think integrity a prettier thing than office.

Mr. Dunnaker urged Paul, seriously, to dismiss so vague and childish a fancy from his breast, and rather to think of what line of defence it would be best for him to pursue. This subject being at length exhausted, Paul resorted to Mrs. Lockins, and inquired whether Dummie had lately honoured that lady with a visit.

Mr. Dunnaker replied that he had, though with much diffidence, appeased her anger against him for his supposed abetment of Paul's excesses, and that of late she had held sundry conversations with Dummie respecting our hero himself. Upon questioning Dummie farther, Paul learned the good matron's reasons for not evincing that solicitude for his return which our hero had reasonably anticipated. The fact was, that she, having no confidence whatsoever in his own resources independent of her, had not been sorry of an opportunity ostensibly, as she hoped, to humble that pride which had so revolted her; and she pleased her vanity by anticipating the time when Paul, starved into submission, would gladly and penitently re-seek the shelter of her roof, and, turned as it were by experience, would never again kick against the yoke which her maternally profusions thought it fitting to impose upon him. She contented herself, then, with obtaining from Dummie the intelligence that our hero was under Mac Grawler's roof, and, therefore, out of all positive

danger to life and limb; and, as she could not foresee the ingenious exertions of intellect by which Paul had converted himself into the "Nobilitas" of "The Asinorum," and thereby saved himself from utter penury, she was perfectly convinced, from her knowledge of character, that the illustrious Mac Grawler would not long continue that protection to the rebellious *protégé*, which, in her opinion, was his only preservative from picking pockets or famishing. To the former decent alternative she knew Paul's great and jejune aversion, and she consequently had little fear for his morals or his safety, in thus abandoning him for a while to chance. Any anxiety, too, that she might otherwise have keenly experienced was deadened by the habitual intoxication now increasing upon the good lady with age, and which, though at times she could be excited to all her characteristic vehemence, kept her senses for the most part plunged into a Lethæan stupor; or, to speak more courteously, into a poetical abstraction from the things of the external world.

"But," said Dummie, as by degrees he imparted the solution of the dance's conduct to the listening ear of his companion—"But I hopes as how ven you be out of this ere scrape, leetle Paul, you vill take varning, and drop Monster Pepper's acquaintance (vich, I must say, I vas always a sorry to see you hencourage), and go home to the Mag, and sam grasp the old inert, for she has not been like the same cretur ever since you vent. She's a delicate-artert oman, that Piggy Lob!"

So appropriate a panegyric on Mrs. Margaret Lobkins might, at another time, have excited Paul's risible muscles; but at that moment he really felt compunction for the unceremonious manner in which he had left her, and the softness of regretful affection imbued in its hallowing colours even the image of Piggy Lob.

In conversation of this intellectual and domestic description, the night and ensuing morn'gling passed away, till Paul found himself in the awful presence of Justice Burnflat. Several cases were disposed of before his own, and among others Mr. Dummie Dummaker obtained his release, though not without a severe reprimand for his sin of inebriety, which no doubt sensibly affected the ingenuous spirit of that noble character. At length Paul's turn came. He heard, as he took his station, a general buzz. At first he imagined it was at his own interesting appearance; but, raising his eyes, he perceived that it was at the entrance of the gentleman who was to become his accuser.

"Hush," said some one near him, "'tis Lawyer Brandon. Ah, he's a 'cute fellow! It will go hard with the person he complains of."

There was a happy fund of elasticity of spirit about our hero; and though he had not the good fortune to have "a blighted heart," a circumstance which, by the poets and philosophers of the present day, is supposed to inspire a man with wonderful courage, and make him impervious to all misfortunes; yet he bore himself up with wonderful courage under his present trying situation, and was far from overwhelmed, though he was certainly a little damped, by the observation he had just heard.

Mr. Brandon, was, indeed, a barrister of considerable reputation, and in high esteem in the world, not only for talent, but also for a great austerity of manners, which, though a little mingled with sternness and acerbity for the errors of other men, was naturally thought the more praiseworthy on that account; there being, as persons of experience are doubtless aware, two divisions in the first class of morality: *imprimis*, a great hatred for the vices of one's neighbour; secondly, the possession of virtues in one's self.

Mr. Brandon was received with great courtesy by Justice Burnellat, and as he came, with in hand a borrowed watch, saying that his time was worth two guineas a moment, the justice proceeded immediately to business.

Nothing could be clearer, shorter, or more satisfactory, than the evidence of Mr. Brandon. The corroborative testimony of the watchman followed; and then Paul was called upon for his defence. This was equally brief with the charge,—but, alas! it was not equally satisfactory. It consisted in a plain declaration of his innocence. His comrade, he confessed, might have stolen the watch, but he humbly suggested that that was exactly the very reason why he had not stolen it.

"How long, fellow," asked Justice Burnellat, "have you known your companion?"

"About half a year!"

"And what is his name and calling?"

Paul hesitated, and declined to answer.

"A sad piece of business!" said the justice, in a melancholy tone, and shaking his head portentously.

The lawyer expounded in the aphorism; but with great magnanimity observed, that he did not wish to lay hand upon the young man. His youth was in his favour, and his offence was probably the consequence of evil company. He suggested, therefore, that as he must be perfectly aware of the relations of his friend, he should reserve a full pardon if he would immediately favour the magistrates with that information. He concluded by remarking, with singular politeness, that it was not the presumption of the youth, but the recovery of his watch, that he desired.

Justice Burnellat, having duly impressed upon our hero's mind the disinterested and Christian mercy of the complainant, and the everlasting obligation Paul was under to him for

its display, now repeated, with double solemnity, those queries respecting the habitation and name of Long Ned, which our hero had before declined to answer.

Grieved are we to confess that Paul, ungrateful far, and wholly untouched by the beautiful benignity of Lawyer Brandon, continued firm in his stubborn denial to betray his comrade, and with equal obduracy he continued to insist upon his own innocence and unblemished respectability of character.

"Your name, young man!" quoth the justice. "Your name, you say, is Paul—Paul what? you have many aliases, I'll be bound."

Here the young gentleman again hesitated; at length he replied,—

"Paul Lobkins, your worship."

"Lobkins!" repeated the judge—"Lobkins! come hither, Saunders: have not we that name down in our black books?"

"So, please your worship," quoth a little stout man, very useful in many respects to the Festus of the police, "there is one Peggy Lobkins, who keeps a public-house, a sort of *flash* *ken*, called the *Mug*, in Thames Court, not exactly in our beat, your worship."

"Ho, ho!" said Justice Burnellat, winking at Mr. Brandon, "we must ask this a little. Pray, Mr. Paul Lobkins, what relation is the good landlady of the *Mug*, in Thames Court, to yourself?"

"None at all, sir," said Paul, hastily,—*"she's only a friend!"*

Upon this there was a laugh in the court.

"Silence," cried the justice: "and I dare say, Mr. Paul Lobkins, that this friend of yours will vouch for the respectability of your character, upon which you are pleased to value yourself?"

"I have not a doubt of it, sir," answered Paul; and there was another laugh.

"And is there any other equally

weighty and praiseworthy friend of yours who will do you the like kind news!"

Paul hesitated; and at that moment, to the surprise of the court, but, above all, to the utter and astounding surprise of those two gentlemen, dressed in the height of the fashion, pushed forward and, bowing to the justice, declared themselves ready to vouch for the thorough respectability and unimpeachable character of Mr. Paul Lobkins, whom they had known, they said, for many years, and for whom they had the greatest respect. While Paul was surveying the persons of these kind friends, whom he never remembered to have seen before in the course of his life, the lawyer, who was a very sharp fellow, whispered to the magistrate; and that dignitary nodding as in assent, and eyeing the new comers, inquired the names of Mr. Lobkins's witnesses.

"Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert, and Mr. William Howard Russell," were the several replies.

Names so aristocratic produced a general sensation. But the impenetrable justice, calling the same Mr. Saunders he had addressed before, asked him to examine well the countenances of Mr. Lobkins' friends.

As the alguazil eyed the features of the memorable Don Raphael and the illustrious Manuel Morales, when the former of these accomplished personages thought it convenient to assume the bustling dignity of an Italian prince, son of the sovereign of the valleys which lie between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy, while the latter was contented with being servant to *Monseigneur le Prince*; even so, with far more earnestness than respect, did Mr. Saunders eye the features of those high-born gentlemen, Messrs. Eustace Fitzherbert and William Howard Russell; but, after a long survey, he withdrew his eyes, made an unsatisfactory and unrecog-

nising gesture to the magistrate, and said,—"Please your worship, they are none of my flock; but Bill Troutling knows more of this sort of genteel chaps than I do."

"Bid Bill Troutling appear!" was the laconic order.

At that name a certain modest confusion might have been visible in the faces of Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert and Mr. William Howard Russell, had not the attention of the court been immediately directed to another case. A poor woman had been committed for seven days to the House of Correction on a charge of *disrespectability*. Her husband, the person most interested in the matter, now came forward to disprove the charge; and by help of his neighbours he succeeded.

"It is all very true," said Justice Burnfat: "but as your wife, my good fellow, will be out in five days, it will be scarcely worth while to release her now."*

So judicious a decision could not fail of satisfying the husband; and the audience became from that moment enlightened as to a very remarkable truth, viz. that five days out of seven bear a peculiarly small proportion to the remaining two, and that people in England have so prodigious a love for punishment, that though it is not worth while to release an innocent woman from prison five days sooner than one would otherwise have done, it is exceedingly well worth while to commit her to prison for seven!

When the husband, passing his rough hand across his eyes, and muttering some vulgar impertinence of another, had withdrawn, Mr. Saunders said,—

"Here be Bill Troutling, your worship!"

"Oh, well," quoth the justice,—
'and now Mr. Eustace Fitz—

* A fact, occurring in the month of January, 1830—*vide* "The Morning Herald."

Hallo, how's this! where are Mr. William Howard Russell and his friend Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert?"

"Echo answered, —Where?"

These noble gentlemen, having a natural dislike to be confronted with so low a person as Mr. Bill Troutling, had, the instant public interest was directed from them, silently disappeared from a scene where their rank in life seemed so little regarded. If, reader, you should be anxious to learn from what part of the world the transitory visitants appeared, know that they were spirits sent by that inimitable magician, Long Ned, partly to report how matters fared in the court, for Mr. Pepper, in pursuance of that old policy which teaches that the master the fox is to the hunters the more chance he has of being overhauled, had immediately on his abrupt departure from Paul, dived into a house in the very street where his ingenuity had displayed itself, and in which coppers and ale mightily allured and regaled an assembly that, to speak respectfully, was more numerous than court; there had he learned how a jack-pot had been seized for unlawful abduction to another man's watch, and there, while he quietly sipped his cyder, had he, with his characteristic gentleness, satisfied his mind, by the conclusion that that arrested unfortunate was no other than Paul. Partly, therefore, as a precaution, for his own safety, that he might receive early intelligence should Paul's defence make a change of residence expedient, and partly out of the friendliness of fellowships to back his companion with such aid as the favourable testimony of two well-dressed persons, little known "about town," might confer, he had despatched these celestial beings, who had appeared under the mortal names of Eustace Fitzherbert and William Howard Russell, to the imperial court of Justice Burellat.

Having thus accounted for the apparition (the *disappearance* requires no commentary) of Paul's "friends," we return to Paul himself.

Despite the perils with which he was girt, our young hero fought on to the last, but the justice was not by any means willing to displease Mr. Brandon; and observing that an incredulous and biting sneer remained stationary on that gentleman's lip during the whole of Paul's defence, he could not but shape his decision according to the well-known acuteness of the celebrated lawyer. Paul was accordingly sentenced to relier for three months to that country-house situated at Bridewell, to which the ungrateful functionaries of justice often banish their most active criminals.

As soon as the sentence was passed, Brandon, whose keen eyes saw no hope of recovering his lost treasure, declared that the rascal had perfectly the Old-Bailey out of countenance, and that he did not doubt but, if ever he lived to be a judge, he should also live to pass a very different description of sentence on the offender.

So saying, he resolved to lose no more time, and very abruptly left the office, without any other comfort than the remembrance that, at all events, he had sent the boy to a place where, let him be ever so innocent at present, he was certain to come out as much inclined to be guilty as his friends could desire; joined to such moral reflection as the tragedy of Hamlet's Furioso might have afforded to himself in that sententious and terse line,

"Thy watch is gone,—watches are made to go!"

Meanwhile, Paul was conducted in state to his retreat, in company with two other offenders, one a middle-aged man, though a very old "*pau*," who was sentenced for getting money under false pretences, and the other a little boy, who had been found guilty

of sleeping under a colonnade; it being the especial beauty of the English law to make no fine-drawn and nonsensical shades of difference be-

tween vice and misfortune, and its peculiar method of protecting the honest being to make as many rogues as possible in as short a space of time.

CHAPTER VIII.

Common Sense.—What is the end of punishment as regards the individual punished?

Custom.—To make him better!

Common Sense.—How do you punish young offenders who are (from their youth, peculiarly alive to example, and whom it is therefore more easy either to ruin or reform than the matured?

Custom.—We send them to the House of Correction, to associate with the d—dest rascals in the country!"

Dialogue between Common Sense and Custom.—Very scarce.

As it was rather late in the day when Paul made his first *entrée* at Bridewell, he passed that night in the "receiving-room." The next morning, as soon as he had been examined by the surgeon, and clothed in the customary uniform, he was ushered, according to his classification, among the good company who had been considered guilty of that compendious offence, "a misdemeanour." Here a tall gentleman marched up to him, and addressed him in a certain language, which might be called the freemasonry of flash; and which Paul, though he did not comprehend *verbatim*, rightly understood to be an inquiry whether he was a thorough rogue and an entire rascal. He answered half in confusion, half in anger; and his reply was so detrimental to any favourable influence he might otherwise have exercised over the interrogator, that the latter personage, giving him a pinch in the ear, shouted out, "Ramp, ramp!" and, at that significant and awful word, Paul found himself surrounded in a trice by a whole host of ingenious tormentors. One pulled this member, another pinched that; one cuffed him before, and another thrashed him behind. By way of interlude to this

pleasing occupation, they stripped him of the very few things that in his change of dress he had retained. One carried off his handkerchief, a second his neckcloth, and a third, luckier than either, possessed himself of a pair of cornelian shirt-buttons, given to Paul as a *gage d'amour* by a young lady who sold oranges near the Tower. Happily, before this initiatory process, technically termed "ramping," and exercised upon all new comers who seem to have a spark of decency in them, had reduced the bones of Paul, who fought tooth and nail in his defence, to the state of magnesia, a man of a grave aspect, who had hitherto plucked his oakum in quiet, suddenly rose, thrust himself between the victim and the assailants, and desired the latter, like one having authority, to leave the lad alone, and go and be d—d.

This proposal to resort to another place for amusement, though uttered in a very grave and tranquil manner, produced that instantaneous effect which admonitions from great rogues generally work upon little. Messieurs the "rampers" ceased from their amusements, and the ring-leader of the gang, thumping Paul heartily on the back, declared he was a capital

fellow, and it was only a bit of a *space* like, which he hoped had not given any offence.

Paul, still clenching his fist, was about to answer in no pacific mood, when a turkey, who did not care in the least how many men he looked up for an offence, but who did not at all like the trouble of looking after any one of his flock to see that the offence was not committed, now suddenly appeared among the set; and, after sending them for the excessive plague they were to him, carried off two of the poorest of the mob to solitary confinement. It happened, of course, that *these two had not taken* the smallest share in the disturbance. This same eve, the company returned to packing oakum, — the tread mill, that admirably just invention, by which a strong man suffers no fatigue, and a weak one loses his health for life, not having been then introduced into our excellent establishments for correcting crime. Bitterly, and with many dark and wrathful feelings, in which the sense of injustice at punishment alone bore him up against the humiliations to which he was subjected, bitterly, and with a swelling heart, in which the thoughts that lead to crime were already forcing their way through a soul suddenly warmed by their growth, did Paul bend over his employment. He felt himself touched on the arm, he turned, and saw that the gentleman who had so kindly delivered him from his tormentors was now sitting next to him. Paul gazed long and earnestly upon his neighbour, struggling with the thought that he had beheld that sagacious countenance in happier times, although now, alas! it was altered, not only by time and vicissitude, but by that air of gravity which the cares of manhood spread gradually over the face of the most thoughtless, — until all doubt melted away, and he exclaimed, —

"Is that you, Mr. Tomlinson! — How glad I am to see you here!"

"And I," returned the quondam murderer for the newspapers, with nasal twang, "should be very glad to see myself any where else!"

Paul made no answer, and Augustus continued.

"To a wise man all places are the same," — so it has been said. I don't believe it, Paul, — I don't believe it. But a truce to reflection. I remembered you the moment I saw you, though you are surprisingly grown. How is my friend Mac Grawler? — still hard at work for 'The Asineum'?"

"I believe so," said Paul sullenly, and hastening to change the conversation; "but tell me, Mr. Tomlinson, how came you hither? I heard you had gone down to the north of England to fulfil a lucrative employment."

"Possibly! the world always misrepresents the actions of those who are constantly before it!"

"It is very true," said Paul; "and I have said the same thing myself a hundred times in 'The Asineum,' for we were never too lavish of our truths in that magnificent journal. 'Tis astonishing what a way we made three ideas go."

"You remind me of myself and my newspaper labours," rejoined Augustus Tomlinson; "I am not quite sure that I had so many as three ideas to spare; for, as you say, it is astonishing how far that number may go, properly managed. It is with writers as with strolling players, — the same three ideas that did for Turks in one scene do for Highlanders in the next; but you must tell me your history one of these days, and you shall hear mine."

"I should be excessively obliged to you for your confidence," said Paul, "and I doubt not but your life must be excessively entertaining. Mine, as yet, has been but unalpid. The lives

of literary men are not fraught with adventure; and I question whether every writer in "The Asineum" has not led pretty nearly the same existence as that which I have sustained myself."

In conversation of this sort our newly restored friends passed the remainder of the day, until the hour of half past four, when the prisoners are to suppose night has begun, and be locked up in their bed-rooms. Tomlinson then, who was glad to re-find a person who had known him in his *bonne jours*, spoke privately to the turnkey; and the result of the conversation was the coupling Paul and Augustus in the same chamber, which was a sort of stone box, that generally accommodated three, and was,—for we have measured it, as we would have measured the cell of the prisoner of Chillon,—just eight feet by six.

We do not intend, reader, to indicate, by broad colours and in long detail, the moral deterioration of our hero; because we have found, by experience, that such pains on our part do little more than make thee blame our stupidity instead of lauding our intention. We shall therefore only work out our moral by subtle hints and brief comments; and we shall now content ourselves with reminding thee that hitherto thou hast seen Paul honest in the teeth of circumstances. Despite the contagion of the Mug,—despite his associates in Fish Lane,—despite his intimacy with Long Ned, thou hast seen him brave temptation, and look forward to some other career than that of robbery or fraud. Nay, even in his prostitution, when driven from the abode of his childhood, thou hast observed how, instead of resorting to some more pleasurable or libertine road of life, he betook himself at once to the dull roof and lispid employments of Mac Grawler, and preferred honestly earning his subsistence by

the sweat of his brain to recurring to any of the numerous ways of living on others with which his experience among the worst part of society must have teemed, and which, to say the least of them, are more alluring to the young and the adventurous than the barren paths of literary labour. Indeed, to let thee into a secret, it had been Paul's daring ambition to raise himself into a worthy member of the community. His present circumstances, it may hereafter be seen, made the cause of a great change in his desires; and the conversation he held that night with the ingenious and skilful Augustus, went more towards fitting him for the hero of this work than all the habits of his childhood or the scenes of his earlier youth. Young people are apt, erroneously, to believe that it is a bad thing to be exceedingly wicked. The House of Correction is so called, because it is a place where so ridiculous a notion is invariably corrected.

The next day Paul was surprised by a visit from Mrs. Lobkins, who had heard of his situation and its causes from the friendly Dummie, and who had managed to obtain from Justice Burnflat an order of admission. They met, Pyramus and Thisbe like, with a wall, or rather an iron gate, between them: and Mrs. Lobkins, after an ejaculation of despair at the obstacle, burst weeping into the pathetic reproach,—

"O Paul, thou hast brought thy pigs to a fine market!"

"'Tis a market proper for pigs, dear dame," said Paul, who, though with a tear in his eye, did not refuse a joke as bitter as it was inelegant; "for, of all others, it is the spot where a man learns to take care of his bacon."

"Hold your tongue!" cried the dame, angrily. "What business has you to gabble on so while you are in limbo?"

"Ah, dear dame," said Paul, "we can't help these rubs and stumbles on our road to preferment!"

"Road to the gallows post," cried the dame. "I tell you, child, you'll live to be hanged in spite of all my care and 'tention to you, though I dedicated you as a scholar, and always hoped as how you would grow up to be an honour to your——"

"King and country," interrupted Paul. "We always say honour to king and country, which means getting rich and paying taxes. The more taxes a man pays, the greater honour he is to both," as Augustus says. Well, dear dame, all in good time."

"What! you is merry, is you? Why does not you weep! Your heart is as hard as a brickbat. It looks quite unnatural and hymn-like to be so *cheerful*!" So saying, the good dame's tears gushed forth with the bitterness of a despairing Parisina.

"Say, nay," said Paul, who, though he suffered far more intensely, bore the suffering far more easily than his patroness, "we cannot mend the matter by crying. Suppose you see what can be done for me. I dare say you may manage to soften the justice's sentence by a little 'oil of palms,' and if you can get me out before I am quite corrupted,—a day or two longer in this infernal place will do the business,—I promise you that I will not only live honestly myself, but with people who live in the same manner."

"Buss me, Paul," said the tender Mrs Lobkins, "buss me,—oh! but I forget the gate; I'll see what can be done. And here, my lad, here's summat for you in the meanwhile,—a drop o' the cretar, to preach comfort to your poor stomach. Hush! struggle it through, or they'll see you."

Here the dame endeavoured to push a stone bottle through the bars of the gate, but, alas! though the neck

passed through, the body refused, and the dame was forced to retract the "cretar." Upon this, the kind-hearted woman renewed her sabbings; and so absorbed was she in her grief, that, seemingly quite forgetting for what purpose she had brought the bottle, she applied it to her own mouth, and consoled her self with that *chicor vite* which she had originally designed for Paul.

This somewhat restored her; and after a most affecting scene, the dame reeled off with the vacillating steps natural to woe, promising, as she went, that, if love or money could shorten Paul's confinement, neither should be wanting. We are rather at a loss to conjecture the exact influence which the former of these arguments, urged by the lovely Margaret, might have had upon Justice Burnflat.

When the good dame had departed, Paul hastened to repick his oakum and rejoin his friend. He found the worthy Augustus privately selling little elegant luxuries, such as tobacco, gin, and notions of dancier vands than the prison allowed, for Augustus, having more money than the rest of his companions, managed, through the friendship of the turnkey to purchase secretly, and to resell at about four hundred per cent., such comforts as the prisoners especially coveted.*

"A proof," said Augustus dryly to Paul, "that, by prudence and exertion, even in those places where a man cannot turn himself, he may manage to turn a penny!"

* A very common practice at the Bridewell. The governor of the Goldsmith Prison, apparently a very intelligent and active man, even was fitted for a most arduous undertaking, informed us, in the only conversation we have had the honour to hold with him, that he thought he had nearly, or quite, destroyed his jurisdiction this illegal method of commerce.

CHAPTER IX.

" 'Relate at large, my godlike guest,' she said,

• The Grecian stratagem,—the town betrayed !"^{*}

Dryden's *Virgil*, b. II. *Æn.*

" Descending thence, they 'scaped !"—*Ibid.*

A GREAT improvement had taken place in the character of Augustus Tomlinson since Paul had last encountered that illustrious man. Then, Augustus had affected the man of pleasure,—the learned loungeur about town,—the all accomplished Pericles of the papers—gaily quoting Horace—gravely flanking a fly from the leader of Lord Dunshunner. Now, a more serious, yet not a less supercilious air had settled upon his features; the pretence of fashion had given way to the pretence of wisdom; and, from the man of pleasure, Augustus Tomlinson had grown to the philosopher. With this elevation alone, too, he was not content: he united the philosopher with the politician; and the ingenious rascal was pleased especially to pique himself upon being "a moderate Whig!" "Paul," he was wont to observe, "believe me, moderate Whiggism is a most excellent creed. It adapts itself to every possible change,—to every conceivable variety of circumstance. It is the only politics for us who are the aristocrats of that free body who rebel against tyrannical laws! for, hang it, I am none of your democrats. Let there be dungeons and turnkeys for the low rascals who whip clothes from the hedge where they hang to dry, or steal down an area in quest of a silver spoon; but houses of correction are not made for men who have received an enlightened education—who abhor your petty thefts as much

as a justice of peace can do,—who ought never to be termed dishonest in their dealings, but, if they are found out, '*unlucky in their speculations!*'"^{*} A pretty thing, indeed, that there should be distinctions of rank among other members of the community, and none among us! Where's your boasted British constitution, I should like to know—where are your privileges of aristocracy, if I, who am a gentleman born, know Latin, and have lived in the best society, should be thrust into this abominable place with a dirty fellow, who was born in a cellar, and could never earn more at a time than would purchase a sausage?—No, no! none of your levelling principles for me! I am liberal, Paul, and love liberty; but, thank Heaven, I despise your democracies!"

Thus, half in earnest, half veiling a natural turn to sarcasm, would this moderate Whig run on for the hour together, during those long nights, commencing at half-past four, in which he and Paul bore each other company.

One evening, when Tomlinson was so bitterly disposed to be prolix that Paul felt himself somewhat wearied by his eloquence, our hero, desirous of a change in the conversation, reminded Augustus of his promise to communicate his history; and the

^{*} A phrase applied to a noted defaulter of the public money.

philosophical Whig, nothing loath to speak of himself, cleared his throat, and began.

HISTORY OF AUGUSTUS TOMLINSON.

"Never mind who was my father, nor what was my native place! My first ancestor was Tommy Linn—his heir became Tom Linn's son;—you have heard the ballad made in his praise:—

"Tommy Linn is a Scotchman born,
He tussel'd his head, and his beard is shorn;
He had a cap made of a hare-skin,—
An elder man is Tommy Linn!" *

"There was a sort of prophecy respecting my ancestor's descendants darkly intimated in the concluding stanza of this ballad:—

"Tommy Linn, and his wife, and his wife's mother,

They all fell into the fire together;
They that lay underneath got a hot skin,—
'We are not enough!' said Tommy Linn."

"You see the prophecy; it is applicable both to gentlemen rogues and to moderate Whigs; for both are common in the world, and both are perpetually bawling out, 'We are not enough!'

"I shall begin my own history by saying, I went to a North Country school, where I was noted for my spence in learning, and my skill at 'promoting a horse'—upon my word I purposed to put! I was intended for the church, wishing, however, to instruct myself in its ceremonies, I persuaded my schoolmaster's maid servant to assist me towards promoting a christening. My father did not like this premature love for the sacred rites. He took me home; and, wishing to give my clerical ardour a different turn, prepared me for writing sermons, by reading me a dozen a day. I grew tired of this, strange

as it may seem to you. 'Father,' said I, one morning, 'it is no use talking, I will not go into the church—that's positive. Give me your blessing, and a hundred pounds, and I'll go up to London, and get a *living* instead of a curacy.' My father stormed, but I got the better at last. I talked of becoming a private tutor; swore I had heard nothing was so easy,—the only things wanted were pupils, and the only way to get them was to go to London, and let my learning be known. My poor father!—well, he's gone, and I am glad of it now! (the speaker's voice faltered)—I got the better, I say, and I came to town, where I had a relation a book-seller. Through his interest, I wrote a book of Travels in *Æthiopia* for an earl's son, who wanted to become a lion; and a Treatise on the Greek Particle, dedicated to the prime minister, for a dean, who wanted to become a bishop,—Greek being, next to interest, the best road to the mitre. These two achievements were liberally paid; so I took a lodging in a first floor, and resolved to make a bold stroke for a wife. What do you think I did?—nay, never guess, it would be hopeless. First, I went to the best tailor, and had my clothes sewn on my back; secondly, I got the pedigree and its genealogies by heart; thirdly, I marched one night, with the coolest deliberation possible, into the house of a duchess, who was giving an immense rout! The newspapers had inspired me with this idea. I had read of the vast crowds which a lady 'at home' sought to win to her house. I had read of staircases impassable, and ladies carried out in a fit, and common sense told me how impossible it was that the fair reviewer should be acquainted with the legality of every importation. I therefore resolved to try my chance, and entered the body of Augustus Tomlinson, as a piece of stolen goods.

* See Ritson's *North-Country Chorister*.
† Ibid.

Faith! the first night I was shy,—I stuck to the staircase, and ogled an old maid of quality, whom I had heard announced as Lady Margaret Sinclair. Doubtless, she had never been ogled before; and she was evidently enraptured with my glances. The next night I read of a ball at the Countess of ——. My heart beat as if I were going to be whipped; but I plucked up courage, and repaired to her ladyship's. There I again beheld the divine Lady Margaret; and, observing that she turned yellow, by way of a blush, when she saw me, I profited by the port I had drunk as an encouragement to my *entrée*, and lounging up in the most modish way possible, I reminded her ladyship of an introduction with which I said I had once been honoured at the Duke of Dashwell's, and requested her hand for the next cotillon. Oh, Paul! fancy my triumph! the old damsel said with a sigh, 'She remembered me very well,' ha! ha! ha! and I carried her off to the cotillon like another Theseus bearing away a second Ariadne. Not to be prolix on this part of my life, I went night after night to balls and routs, for admission to which half the fine gentlemen in London would have given their ears. And I improved my time so well with Lady Margaret, who was her own mistress, and had five thousand pounds,—a devilish bad portion for some, but not to be laughed at by me,—that I began to think *when* the happy day should be fixed. Meanwhile, as Lady Margaret introduced me to some of her friends, and my lodgings were in a good situation, I had been honoured with some real invitations. The only two questions I ever was asked were (carelessly), 'Was I the only son?' and on my veritable answer 'Yes!' 'What, (this was more warmly put)—what was my county?'—Luckily, my county was a wide one,—Yorkshire; and any of its inhabitants whom the

fair interrogators might have questioned about me could only have answered, 'I was not in their part of it.'

"Well, Paul, I grew so bold by success, that the devil one day put into my head to go to a great dinner-party at the Duke of Dashwell's. I went, dined,—nothing happened. I came away, and the next morning I read in the papers,—

"'Mysterious affair,—person lately going about,—first houses—most fashionable parties—nobody knows—Duke of Dashwell's yesterday. Duke not like to make disturbance—as—royalty present.'"

"The journal dropped from my hands. At that moment, the girl of the house gave me a note from Lady Margaret,—alluded to the paragraph;—wondered who was 'The Stranger,'—hoped to see me that night at Lord A——'s, to whose party I said I had been asked;—speak then more fully on those matters I had touched on—in short, dear Paul, a tender epistle! All great men are fatalists: I am one now: fate made me a madman: in the very face of this ominous paragraph I mustered up courage, and went that night to Lord A——'s. The fact is, my affairs were in confusion—I was greatly in debt: I knew it was necessary to finish my conquest over Lady Margaret as soon as possible; and Lord A——'s seemed the best place for the purpose. Nay, I thought delay so dangerous, after the cursed paragraph, that a day might unmask me, and it would be better therefore not to lose an hour in finishing the play of 'The Stranger,' with the farce of the 'Honey Moon.' Behold me then at Lord A——'s, leading off Lady Margaret to the dance. Behold me whispering the sweetest of things in her ear. Imagine her approving my suit, and gently chiding me for

talking of Gracia Green. Conceive all this, my dear fellow, and just at the height of my triumph, dilate the eyes of your imagination, and behold the stately form of Lord A——, my noble host, marching up to me, while a voice that, though low and quiet as an evening breeze, made my heart sink into my shoes, said, 'I believe, sir, you have received no invitation from Lady A——?'

'Not a word could I utter, Paul,—not a word. Had it been the high-road instead of a ball-room, I could have talked loudly enough, but I was under a spell. 'Ehem!' I faltered at last.—'E—h—e—m! Some may take, I—L.' There I stopped. 'Sir,' said the Earl, regarding me with a grave sternness, 'you had better withdraw!'

'Bless me! what's all this?' cried Lady Margaret, dropping my palest arm, and gazing on me as if she expected me to talk like a hero.

'Oh,' said I, 'Eh—e—m, eh—e—m, I will explain to-morrow, chem, o—h—e—m.' I made to the door; all the eyes in the room seemed turned into burning glasses, and blistered the very skin on my face. I heard a gentle knock as I left the apartment; Lady Margaret fainting, I suppose. These ended my courtship and my adventures in 'the best society.' I felt melancholy at the ill success of my scheme. You must allow, it was a magnificent project. What moral courage! I admire myself when I think of it. Without an introduction, without knowing a soul, to become, not by my own resolution, free of the finest houses in London, dancing with earls' daughters, and all but carrying off an earl's daughter myself as my wife. If I had, the friends *must* have done something for me; and Lady Margaret Tomlinson might perhaps have introduced the youthful genius of her Augustus to parliament or the ministry. Oh what a fall was there!

yet faith, ha! ha! ha! I could not help laughing, despite of my chagrin, when I remembered that for three months I had imposed on these 'delicate exclusives,' and been literally invited by many of them, who would not have asked the younger sons of their own cousins; merely because I lived in a good street, avowed myself an only child, and talked of my property in Yorkshire! Ha, ha! how bitter the mercenary dupes must have felt, when the discovery was made! what a pill for the good matrons who had coupled my image with that of some filial Mary or Jane,—ha! ha! ha! the triumph was almost worth the mortification. However, as I said before, I fell melancholy on it, especially as my duns became menacing. So, I went to consult with my cousin the book-seller, he recommended me to compose for the journals, and obtained me an offer. I went to work very patiently for a short time, and contracted some agreeable friendships with gentlemen whom I met at an ordinary in St. James's. Still, my duns, though I paid them by dribbles, were the plague of my life. I confessed as much to one of my new friends. 'Come to Bath with me,' quoth he, 'for a week, and you shall return as rich as a Jew.' I accepted the offer, and went to Bath in my friend's chariot. He took the name of Lord Dunsinmer, an Irish peer who had never been out of Tipperary, and was not therefore likely to be known at Bath. He took also a house for a year, filled it with wines, books, and a skeleton of plaster; as he talked vaguely of settling or his younger brother took for the town at the next Parliament, he bought those goods of the townspeople, in order to encourage their trade. I managed secretly to transport them to London and sell them; and as we disposed of them fifty per cent. under cost price, our customers, the townbrokers, were not very

inquisitive. We lived a jolly life at Bath for a couple of months, and departed one night, leaving our house-keeper to answer all interrogatories. We had taken the precaution to wear disguises, stuffed ourselves out, and changed the hues of our hair: my noble friend was an adept in these transformations, and though the police did not sleep on the business,—they never stumbled on us. I am especially glad we were not discovered, for I liked Bath excessively, and I intend to return there some of these days and retire from the world—on an heiress!

"Well, Paul, shortly after this adventure, I made your acquaintance. I continued ostensibly my literary profession, but only as a mask for the labours I did not profess. A circumstance obliged me to leave London rather precipitately. Lord Dunshunser joined me in Edinburgh. D—— it, instead of doing anything *there*, we were done! The veriest urchin that ever crept through the High Street is more than a match for the most scientific of Englishmen. With us it is art; with the Scotch it is nature. They pick your pockets, without using their fingers for it; and they prevent reprisal, by having nothing for you to pick.

"We left Edinburgh with very long faces, and at Carlisle we found it necessary to separate. For my part, I went as a valet to a nobleman who had just lost his last servant at Carlisle by a fever: my friend gave me the best of characters! My new master was a very clever man. He astonished people at dinner by the impromptus he prepared at breakfast;—in a word, he was a wit. He soon saw, for he was learned himself, that I had received a classical education, and he employed me in the confidential capacity of finding quotations for him. I classed these aphoristically and under three heads: 'Parliamentary

Literary, Dining-out.' These were again subdivided, into 'Fine,'—'Learned,' and 'Jocular;' so that my master knew at once where to refer for genius, wisdom, and wit. He was delighted with my management of his intellects. In compliment to him, I paid more attention to politics than I had done before, for he was a 'great Whig,' and uncommonly liberal in every thing,—but money! Hence, Paul, the origin of my political principles; and, I thank Heaven, there is not now a rogue in England who is a better, that is to say, more of a moderate, Whig than your humble servant. I continued with him nearly a year. He discharged me for a fault worthy of my genius,—other servants may lose the watch or the coat of their master; I went at nobler game and lost him—*his private character!*"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, I was enamoured of a lady who would not have looked at me as Mr. Tomlinson; so I took my master's clothes, and occasionally his carriage, and made love to my nymph, as Lord ——. Her vanity made her indiscreet. The Tory papers got hold of it; and my master, in a change of ministers, was declared by George the Third to be 'too gay for a Chancellor of the Exchequer.' An old gentleman who had had fifteen children by a wife like a Gorgon, was chosen instead of my master: and although the new minister was a fool in his public capacity, the moral public were perfectly content with him, because of his *private virtues!*"

"My master was furious, made the strictest inquiry, *found* me out, and *turned* me out too!"

"A Whig not in place has an excuse for disliking the constitution. My distress almost made me a republican; but, true to my creed, I must confess that I would only have levelled upwards. I especially disaffected the inequality of riches: I looked moodily

on every carriage that passed. I even fringed like a second *Outline* at the station of a gentleman's kitchen. My last situation had not been lucrative; I had neglected my perquisites, in my ardour for position. My master, too, refused to give me a character.—who would take me without one!

"I was asking myself this melancholy question one morning, when I suddenly encountered one of the fine friends I had picked up at my old haunt, the ordinary, in St. James's. His name was Pepper."

"Pepper!" cried Paul.

Without heeding the exclamation, Thompson continued.

"We went to a tavern and drank a bottle together. Wine made me communicative; it also opened my comrade's heart. He asked me to take a ride with him that night towards Hounslow: I did so, and found a purse."

"How fortunate! Where?"

"In a gentleman's pocket,—I was as pleased with my luck, that I went the same road twice a week, in order to see if I could pick up any more purses. Fate favoured me, and I lived for a long time the life of the ghost. Oh, Paul, you know not—you know not what a glorious life is that of a highwayman; but you shall taste it one of these days, you shall, on my honour."

"I now lived with a club of honest fellows: we called ourselves 'The Associates,' for we were mighty respected in our associations, and only those who did business on a grand scale were admitted into our set. For my part, with all my love for my profession, I liked ingenuity still better than force, and preferred what the vulgar call swindling, even to the highroad. On an expedition of this sort, I rode once into a country town, and saw a crowd assembled in one room,—I joined it, and, guess my feelings! behold my poor friend,

Viscount Dunshunter, just about to be hanged! I rode off as fast as I could,—I thought I saw Jack Ketch at my heels. My horse threw me at a hedge, and I broke my collar-bone. In the confinement that ensued, gloomy ideas floated before me. I did not like to be hanged! so I reasoned against my errors, and repented. I recovered slowly, returned to town, and repaired to my cousin the bookseller. To say truth, I had played him a little trick: collected some debts of his by a mistake—very natural in the confusion incident on my distresses. However, he was extremely unkind about it; and the mistake, natural as it was, had cost me his acquaintance.

"I went now to him with the penitential aspect of the prodigal son, and, faith, he would not have made a bad representation of the fatted calf about to be killed on my return: so corpulent looked he, and so dejected! 'Graceless reprobate!' he began, 'your poor father is dead!' I was exceedingly shocked! but—never fear, Paul, I am not about to be pathetic. My father had divided his fortune among all his children; my share was 500*l*. The possession of this sum made my penitence seem much more sincere in the eyes of my good cousin! and after a very pathetic scene, he took me once more into favour. I now consulted with him as to the best method of laying out my capital and recovering my character. We could not devise any scheme at the first conference; but the second time I saw him, my cousin said with a cheerful countenance, 'Cheer up, Augustine, I have got thee a situation. Mr. Asgrave, the banker, will take thee as a clerk. He is a most worthy man; and having a vast deal of learning, he will respect thee for thy acquisitions.' The same day I was introduced to Mr. Asgrave, who was a little man with a fine bald benevolent head, and after a long conversation

which he was pleased to hold with me, I became one of his quill drivers. I don't know how it was, but by little and little I rose in my master's good graces: I propitiated him, I fancy, by disposing of my *Book* according to his advice: he laid it out for me, on what he said was famous security, on a landed estate. Mr. Asgrave was of social habits,—he had a capital house and excellent wines. As he was not very particular in his company, nor ambitious of visiting the great, he often suffered me to make one of his table, and was pleased to hold long arguments with me about the ancients. I soon found out that my master was a great moral philosopher; and being myself in weak health, sated with the ordinary pursuits of the world, in which my experience had forestalled my years, and naturally of a contemplative temperament, I turned my attention to the moral studies which so fascinated my employer. I read through nine shelves full of metaphysicians, and knew exactly the points in which those illustrious thinkers quarrelled with each other, to the great advance of the science. My master and I used to hold many a long discussion about the nature of good and evil; and as by help of his benevolent forehead, and a clear dogged voice, he always seemed to our audience to be the wiser and better man of the two, he was very well pleased with our disputes. This gentleman had an only daughter, an awful shrew with a face like a hatchet: but philosophers overcome personal defects; and thinking only of the good her wealth might enable me to do to my fellow-creatures, I secretly made love to her. You will say, that was playing my master but a scurvy trick in return for his kindness: not at all, my master himself had convinced me, that there was no such virtue as gratitude. It was an error of vulgar moralists. I yielded to his arguments, and at length privately

espoused his daughter. The day after this took place, he summoned me to his study. 'So, Augustus,' said he very mildly, 'you have married my daughter: nay, never look confused; I saw a long time ago that you were resolved to do so, and I was very glad of it.'

"I attempted to falter out something like thanks. 'Never interrupt me!' said he. 'I had two reasons for being glad:—1st, Because my daughter was the plague of my life, and I wanted some one to take her off my hands;—2dly, Because I required your assistance on a particular point, and I could not venture to ask it of any one but my son-in-law. In fine, I wish to take you into partnership!'"

"'Partnership!' cried I, falling on my knees. 'Noble—generous man!'"

"'Stay a bit,' continued my father-in-law. 'What funds do you think requisite for carrying on a bank? You look puzzled! Not a shilling! You will put in just as much as I do. You will put in rather more: for you once put in five hundred pounds, which has been spent long ago. I don't put in a shilling of my own. I live on my clients, and I very willingly offer you half of them!'"

"Imagine, dear Paul, my astonishment, my dismay! I saw myself married to a hideous shrew—son-in-law to a penniless scoundrel, and cheated out of my whole fortune! Compare this view of the question with that which had blazed on me when I contemplated being son-in-law to the rich Mr. Asgrave. I stormed at first. Mr. Asgrave took up *Bacon On the Advancement of Learning*, and made no reply till I was cooled by explosion. You will perceive that, when passion subsided, I necessarily saw that nothing was left for me but adopting my father-in-law's proposal. Thus, by the fatality which attended me, at the very time I meant to reform, I was forced into scoundrelism,

and I was driven into defrauding a vast number of persons by the accident of being son in law to a great moralist. As Mr Asgrave was an indolent man, who passed his mornings in speculations on virtue, I was made the active partner. I spent the day at the counting house; and when I came home for recreation, my wife scratched my eyes out."

"But were you never recognised as 'the stranger,' or 'the adventurer,' in your new capacity?"

"No; for, of course, I assumed, in all my changes, both aliases and disguises. And, to tell you the truth, my marriage so altered me that, what with a snuff coloured coat and a brown scratch wig, with a pen in my right ear, I looked the very picture of staid respectability. My face grew an inch longer every day. Nothing is so respectable as a long face; and a subdued expression of countenance is the surest sign of unimpaired prosperity. Well, we went on splendidly enough for about a year. Meanwhile I was wonderfully improved in philosophy. You have no idea how a scolding wife sublimates and rarifies one's intellect. Thunder clears the air, you know! At length, unhappily for my fame (for I contemplated a magnificent moral history of man, which, had she lived a year longer, I should have completed), my wife died in childbirth. My father-in-law and I were talking over the event, and finding fault with civilization, by the enervating habits by which women die of their children, instead of bringing them forth without being even conscious of the circumstance,—when a bit of paper, sealed away, was given to my partner; he looked over it—finished the discussion, and then told me our bank had stopped payment. 'Now, Augustus,' said he, lighting his pipe with the bit of paper, 'you see the good of having nothing to lose!'

"We did not pay quite sixpence in

the pound; but my partner was thought so unfortunate that the British public raised a subscription for him, and he retired on an annuity, greatly respected and very much compensated. As I had not been so well known as a moralist, and had not the prepossessing advantage of a bald benevolent head, nothing was done for me, and I was turned once more on the wide world, to moralise on the vicissitudes of fortune. My cousin the bookseller was no more, and his son cut me. I took a garret in Warwick Court, and, with a few books, my only consolation, I endeavoured to nerve my mind to the future. It was at this time, Paul, that my studies really availed me. I meditated much, and I became a true philosopher, viz. a practical one. My actions were henceforth regulated by principle, and, at some time or other, I will convince you, that the road of true morals never avoids the pockets of your neighbour. So soon as my mind had made the grand discovery which Mr Asgrave had made before me, that one should live according to a system,—for if you do wrong, it is then your system that errs, not you,—I took to the road, without any of those stings of conscience which had hitherto annoyed me in such adventures. I formed one of a capital knot of 'Free Agents,' whom I will introduce to you some day or other, and I soon rose to distinction among them. But, about six weeks ago, not less than formerly preferring by-ways to highways, I attempted to possess myself of a carriage, and sell it at discount. I was acquitted on the felony, but sent hither by Justice Barnard on the madman's tour. Thus far, my young friend, hath as yet proceeded the life of Augustus Tomlinson."

The history of this gentleman made a deep impression on Paul. The impression was strengthened by the

conversations subsequently holden with Augustus. That worthy was a dangerous and subtle persuader. He had really read a good deal of history, and something of morals; and he had an ingenious way of defending his rascally practices by syllogisms from the latter, and examples from the former. These theories he clenched, as it were, by a reference to the existing politics of the day. Cheaters of the public, on false pretences, he was pleased to term "*moderate Whigs*;" bullying demanders of your purse were "*high Tories*;" and thieving in gangs was "*the effect of the spirit of party*." There was this difference between Augustus Tomlinson and Long Ned: Ned was the acting knave; Augustus, the reasoning one; and we may see, therefore, by a little reflection, that Tomlinson was a far more perilous companion than Pepper, for showy theories are always more seductive to the young and clever than suasive examples, and the vanity of the youthful makes them better pleased by being convinced of a thing, than by being enticed to it.

A day or two after the narrative of Mr. Tomlinson, Paul was again visited by Mrs. Lobkins; for the regulations against frequent visitors were not then so strictly enforced as we understand them to be now; and the good dame came to deplore the ill success of her interview with Justice Burnham.

We spare the tender-hearted reader a detail of the affecting interview that ensued. Indeed, it was but a repetition of the one we have before narrated. We shall only say, as a proof of Paul's tenderness of heart, that when he took leave of the good matron, and bade "God bless her," his voice faltered, and the tears stood in his eyes,—just as they were wont to do in the eyes of George the Third, when that excellent monarch was

pleased graciously to encore "God save the King!"

"I'll be hanged," soliloquised our hero, as he slowly bent his course towards the subtle Augustus,—"*I'll be hanged* (humph! the denunciation is prophetic), if I don't feel as grateful to the old lady for her care of me as if she had never ill-used me. As for my parents, I believe I have little to be grateful for, or proud of, in that quarter. My poor mother, by all accounts, seems scarcely to have had even the brute virtue of maternal tenderness; and in all human likelihood I shall never know whether I had one father or fifty. But what matters it? I rather like the better to be independent; and, after all, what do nine-tenths of us ever get from our parents but an ugly name, and advice which, if we follow, we are wretched,—and if we neglect, we are disinherited!"

Comforting himself with these thoughts, which perhaps took their philosophical complexion from the conversations he had lately held with Augustus, and which broke off into the muttered air of

"Why should we quarrel for riches?"

Paul repaired to his customary avocations.

In the third week of our hero's captivity, Tomlinson communicated to him a plan of escape that had occurred to his sagacious brain. In the yard appropriated to the amusements of the gentlemen "*misdemeaning*," there was a water-pipe that, skirting the wall, passed over a door, through which, every morning, the pious captives passed, in their way to the chapel. By this, Tomlinson proposed to escape; for to the pipe which reached from the door to the wall, in a slanting and easy direction, there was a sort of skirting-board; and a dexterous and nimble man might readily, by the help of this

board, convey himself along the pipe, until the progress of that useful conductor—which was happily very brief—was stopped by the summit of the wall, where it found a sequel in another pipe, that descended to the ground on the opposite side of the wall. Now, on this opposite side was the garden of the prison: in this garden was a watchman; and this watchman was the hobgoblin of Tomlinson's scheme. "For, suppose us safe in the garden," said he, "what shall we do with this confounded fellow!"

"But that is not all," added Paul; "for even were there no watchman, there is a terrible wall, which I noted especially last week, when we were set to work in the garden, and which has no pipe, save a perpendicular one, that a man must have the legs of a fly to be able to climb!"

"Success!" returned Tomlinson: "I will show you how to climb the stubbornest wall in Christendom, if one has but the least cheer: it is the watchman—the watchman, we trust——"

"What?" asked Paul, observing his comrade did not conclude the sentence.

It was some time before the sage Augustus replied; he then said, in a musing tone—

"I have been thinking, Paul, whether it would be consistent with virtue, and that strict code of morals by which all my actions are regulated, to—slay the watchman!"

"Good heavens!" cried Paul, horror-stricken.

"And I have decided," continued Augustus, solemnly, without regard to the exclamation, "that the action would be perfectly justifiable!"

"Villain!" exclaimed Paul, recoiling to the other end of the stone box—for it was night—in which they were caged.

"But," pursued Augustus, who seemed soliloquising, and whose voice,

sounding calm and thoughtful, like Young's in the famous monologue in *Hamlet*, denoted that he heeded not the uncourteous interruption—"but opinion does not always influence conduct; and although it may be virtuous to murder the watchman, I have not the heart to do it. I trust in my future history I shall not, by discerning moralists, be too severely censured for a weakness for which my physical temperament is alone to blame!"

Despite the turn of the soliloquy, it was a long time before Paul could be reconciled to further conversation with Augustus; and it was only from the belief that the moralist had leaned to the jesting vein that he at length resumed the consultation.

The conspirators did not, however, bring their scheme that night to any ultimate decision. The next day, Augustus, Paul, and some others of the company, were set to work in the garden; and Paul then observed that his friend, wheeling a barrow close by the spot where the watchman stood, overturned its contents. The watchman was good-natured enough to assist him in refilling the barrow; and Tomlinson profited so well by the occasion, that, that night, he informed Paul, that they would have nothing to dread from the watchman's vigilance. "He has promised," said Augustus, "for certain con-si-de-ra-tions, to allow me to knock him down: he has also promised to be so much hurt, as not to be able to move, until we are over the wall. Our main difficulty now, then, is, the first step,—namely, to climb the pipe unperceived!"

"As to that," said Paul, who developed, through the whole of the scheme, organs of sagacity, boldness, and invention, which charmed his friend, and certainly promised well for his future career—"as to that, I think we may manage the first ascent with less danger than you imagine:

the mornings, of late, have been very foggy; they are almost dark at the hour we go to chapel. Let you and I close the file: the pipe passes just above the door; our hands, as we have tried, can reach it; and a spring of no great agility will enable us to raise ourselves up to a footing on the pipe and the skirting board. The climbing, then, is easy; and, what with the dense fog, and our own quickness, I think we shall have little difficulty in gaining the garden. The only precautions we need use are, to wait for a very dark morning, and to be sure that we are the last of the file, so that no one behind may give the alarm——"

"Or attempt to follow our example, and spoil the pie by a superfluous plum!" added Augustus. "You counsel admirably; and one of these days, if you are not hung in the meanwhile, will, I venture to augur, be a great logician."

The next morning was clear and frosty; but the day after was, to use Tomlinson's simile, "as dark as if all the negroes of Africa had been stewed down into air." "You might have cut the fog with a knife," as the proverb says. Paul and Augustus could not even see how significantly each looked at the other.

It was a remarkable trait of the daring temperament of the former, that, young as he was, it was fixed that he should lead the attempt. At the hour, then, for chapel—the prisoners passed as usual through the door. When it came to Paul's turn, he drew himself by his hands to the pipe, and then creeping along its sinuous course, gained the wall before he had even fetched his breath. Rather more clumsily, Augustus followed his friend's example: once his foot slipped, and he was all but over. He extended his hands involuntarily, and caught Paul by the leg. Happily our hero had then gained the wall to

which he was clinging, and for once in a way, one rogue raised himself without throwing over another. Behold Tomlinson and Paul now seated for an instant on the wall to recover breath! the latter then,—the descent to the ground was not very great,—letting his body down by his hands, dropped into the garden.

"Hur!" asked the prudent Augustus in a hoarse whisper before he descended from his "bad eminence," being even willing

"To hear those ills he had,
Than fly to others that he knew not of,"

without taking every previous precaution in his power.

"No!" was the answer in the same voice, and Augustus dropped.

So soon as this latter worthy had recovered the shock of his fall, he lost not a moment in running to the other end of the garden: Paul followed. By the way Tomlinson stopped at a heap of rubbish, and picked up an immense stone; when they came to the part of the wall they had agreed to scale, they found the watchman, about whom they needed not, by the by, to have concerned themselves; for had it not been arranged that he was to have met them, the deep fog would have effectually prevented him from seeing them: this faithful guardian Augustus knocked down, not with the stone, but with ten guineas; he then drew forth from his dress a thickish cord which he had procured, some days before, from the turnkey, and fastening the stone firmly to one end, threw that end over the wall. Now the wall had (as walls of great strength mostly have) an overhanging sort of battlement on either side, and the stone, when flung over and drawn to the tether of the cord to which it was attached, necessarily hitched against this projection; and thus the cord was, as it were, fastened to the wall, and Tomlinson was enabled by

it to draw himself up to the top of the barrier. He performed this feat with contrasted address, like one who had often practiced it; albeit, the discreet adventurer had not mentioned in his narrative to Paul any previous occasion for the practice. As soon as he had gained the top of the wall, he threw down the cord to his companion, and, in consideration of Paul's inexperience in that manner of climbing, gave the fastening of the rope an additional security by holding it himself. With showiness and labour Paul hoisted himself up; and then, by transferring the stone to the other side of the wall, where it made, of course, a similar notch, our two adventurers were enabled successfully to slide down, and consummate their escape from the house of correction.

"Follow me now," said Augustus, as he took to his heels; and Paul pursued him through a labyrinth of alleys and lanes, through which he ran and dodged with a variable and shifting velocity that, had not Paul kept close upon him, would very soon have enabled the fugitive to snatch him from the eyes of his young ally. Happily the transparency of the morning, the straightness of the streets passed through, and, above all, the extreme darkness of the atmosphere, prevented that detection and arrest which their prisoners' garb would otherwise have insured them. At length, they found

themselves in the fields; and, skulking along hedges, and diligently avoiding the highroad, they continued to fly onward, until they had advanced several miles into "the bowels of the land." At that time "the bowels" of Augustus Tomlinson began to remind him of their demands; and he accordingly suggested the *desirability* of their seizing the first peasant they encountered, and causing him to exchange clothes with one of the fugitives, who would thus be enabled to enter a public house and provide for their mutual necessities. Paul agreed to this proposition, and, accordingly, they watched their opportunity and caught a ploughman. Augustus stripped him of his frock, hat, and worsted stockings; and Paul, hardened by necessity and companionship, helped to tie the poor ploughman to a tree. They then continued their progress for about an hour, and, as the shades of evening fell around them, they discovered a public house. Augustus entered, and returned in a few minutes laden with bread and cheese, and a bottle of beer. Prison fare cures a man of daintiness, and the two fugitives dined on these homely viands with considerable satisfaction. They then resumed their journey, and at length, wearied with exertion, they arrived at a lonely haystack, where they resolved to repose for an hour or two.

CHAPTER X.

"Unlike the ribald, whose licentious jest
Pollutes his banquet, and insults his guest;
From wealth and grandeur easy to descend,
Then joyist to lose the master in the friend:
We round thy board the cheerful menials see,
Gay with the smile of bland equality;
No social care the gracious lord disdains;
Love prompts to love, and reverence reverence gains."

Translation of LUCAN to PISO, prefixed to the Twelfth Paper of "The Rambler."

COYLY shone down the bashful stars upon our adventurers, as, after a short nap behind the haystack, they stretched themselves, and, looking at each other, burst into an involuntary and hilarious laugh at the prosperous termination of their exploit.

Hitherto they had been too occupied, first by their flight, then by hunger, then by fatigue, for self-gratulation; now they robbed their hands, and joked like runaway school-boys, at their escape.

By degrees their thoughts turned from the past to the future; and "Tell me, my dear fellow," said Augustus, "what you intend to do. I trust I have long ago convinced you, that it is no sin 'to serve our friends' and to 'be true to our party;' and therefore, I suppose, you will decide upon taking to the road!"

"It is very odd," answered Paul, "that I should have any scruples left after your lectures on the subject; but I own to you frankly, that, somehow or other, I have doubts whether thieving be really the honestest profession I could follow."

"Listen to me, Paul," answered Augustus; and his reply is not unworthy of notice. "All crime and all excellence depend upon a good choice of words. I see you look puzzled; I will explain. If you take money from the public, and say you have robbed, you have indubitably committed a

great crime; but if you do the same, and say you have been relieving the necessities of the poor, you have done an excellent action: if, in afterwards dividing this money with your companions, you say you have been sharing booty, you have committed an offence against the laws of your country; but if you observe that you have been sharing with your friends the gains of your industry, you have been performing one of the noblest actions of humanity. To knock a man on the head is neither virtuous nor guilty, but it depends upon the language applied to the action to make it murder or glory.* Why not say, then, that you have testified 'the courage of a hero,' rather than 'the atrocity of a ruffian?' This is perfectly clear, is it not?"

"It seems so," answered Paul.

"It is so self-evident, that it is the way all governments are carried on. Wherefore, my good Paul, we only do

* We observe in a paragraph from an American paper, copied without comment into the *Morning Chronicle*, a singular proof of the truth of Tomlinson's philosophy. "Mr. Rowland Stephenson (so runs the extract), the celebrated English banker, has just purchased a considerable tract of land," &c. Most philosophical of paragraphists! "Celebrated English banker!" that sentence is a better illustration of verbal fallacies than all Bentham's treatises put together. "Celebrated!" O Mercury, what a dexterous epithet!

what all other legislators do. We are never wrong so long as we call our selfish honest fellows, and we never commit a crime so long as we can term it a virtue! What say you now?"

Paul smiled, and was silent a few moments before he replied:

"There is very little doubt but that you are wrong; yet if you are, so are all the rest of the world. It is of no use to be the only white sheep of the flock. Wherefore, my dear Tomlinson, I will in future be an excellent citizen, *relieve the necessities of the poor, and share the gains of my industry with my friends.*"

"Bravo!" cried Tomlinson. "And now that that is settled, the sooner you are inaugurated the better. Since the starlight has shone forth, I see that I was in a place I ought to be very well acquainted with; or, if you like to be suspicious, you may believe that I have brought you purposely in this direction. But first let me ask if you feel any great desire to pass the night by this haystack, or whether you would like a song and the patch-bred almost as much as the open air, with the chance of being cut up in a punch of hay by some strutting cow?"

"You may conceive my choice," answered Paul.

"Well, then, there is an excellent fellow near here, who keeps a public house, and is a firm ally and generous patron of the back of the cross. At certain periods they hold weekly meetings at his house: this is one of the nights. What say you? shall I introduce you to the club?"

"I should be very glad, if they will admit me," returned Paul, whom many and conflicting thoughts rendered hesitant.

"Oh! no fear of that, under my auspices. To tell you the truth, though we are a tolerant sect, we welcome every new proselyte with enthusiasm. But are you tired?"

"A little; the house is not far, you say?"

"About a mile off," answered Tomlinson. "Lean on me."

Our wanderers now leaving the haystack, struck across part of Finchley Common; for the abode of the worthy publican was felicitously situated, and the scene in which his guests celebrated their festivities was close by that on which they often performed their exploits.

As they proceeded, Paul questioned his friend touching the name and character of "mine host," and the all-knowing Augustus Tomlinson answered him, Quaker-like, by a question,—

"Have you never heard of Gentleman George?"

"What! the noted head of a flash public house in the country? To be sure I have, often; my poor nurse, Dame Lobkins, used to say he was the best-spoken man in the trade!"

"Ay, so he is still. In his youth, George was a very handsome fellow, but a little too fond of his lass and his bottle to please his father, a very staid old gentleman, who walked about on Sundays in a bob-wig and a gold-headed cane, and was a much better farmer on week-days than he was head of a public-house. George used to be a remarkably smart-dressed fellow, and so he is to this day. He has a great deal of wit, is a very good whist player, has a capital cellar, and is so fond of seeing his friends drunk, that he bought some time ago a large pewter measure in which six men can stand upright. The girls, or rather the old women, to which last he used to be much more civil of the two, always liked him; they say, nothing is so fine as his fine speeches, and they give him the title of '*Gentleman George*.' He is a nice, kind-hearted man in many things. Pray Heaven we shall have no cause to miss him when he departs. But, to tell you

the truth, he takes more than his share of our common purse."

"What, is he avaricious?"

"Quite the reverse; but he's so cursedly fond of building, he invests all *his* money (and wants us to invest all *ours*) in houses; and there's one confounded dog of a bricklayer, who runs him up terrible bills,—a fellow called 'Cunning 'Nat,' who is equally adroit in spoiling ground and improving *ground rent*."

"What do you mean?"

"Ah! thereby hangs a tale. But we are near the place now; you will see a curious set."

As Tomlinson said this, the pair approached a house standing alone, and seemingly without any other abode in the vicinity. It was of curious and grotesque shape, painted white, with a Gothic chimney, a Chinese sign-post (on which was depicted a gentleman fishing, with the words "The Jolly Angler" written beneath), and a porch that would have been Grecian, if it had not been Dutch. It stood in a little field, with a hedge behind it, and the common in front. Augustus stopped at the door, and, while he paused, bursts of laughter rang cheerily within.

"Ah, the merry boys!" he muttered: "I long to be with them!" and then with his clenched fist he knocked four times on the door. There was a sudden silence, which lasted about a minute, and was broken by a voice within, asking who was there. Tomlinson answered by some cabalistic word; the door was opened, and a little boy presented himself.

"Well, my lad," said Augustus, "and how is your master?—Stout and hearty, if I may judge by his voice."

"Ay, Master Tommy, ay, he's hoosing away at a fine rate in the back-parlour, with Mr. Pepper and fighting Attie, and half-a-score more

of them. He'll be wondrous glad to see you, I'll be bound."

"Show this gentleman into the bar," rejoined Augustus, "while I go and pay my respects to honest Geordie!"

The boy made a sort of a bow, and leading our hero into the bar, consigned him to the care of Sal, a boxom barmaid, who reflected credit on the taste of the landlord, and who received Paul with marked distinction and a gill of brandy.

Paul had not long to play the amiable, before Tomlinson rejoined him with the information that Gentleman George would be most happy to see him in the back-parlour, and that he would there find an old friend in the person of Mr. Pepper.

"Wha'! is he here?" cried Paul. "The sorry knave! to let me be caged in his stead!"

"Gently, gently, no misapplication of terms," said Augustus; "that was not knavery, that was *prudence*, the greatest of all virtues and the rarest. But come along, and Pepper shall explain to-morrow."

Threading a gallery or passage, Augustus preceded our hero, opened a door, and introduced him into a long low apartment, where sat, round a table spread with pipes and liquor, some ten or a dozen men, while at the top of the table, in an arm-chair, presided Gentleman George. That dignity was a portly and comely gentleman, with a knowing look, and a Welsh wig, worn, as the *Morning Chronicle* says of his Majesty's hat, "in a *déjà* manner, on one side." Being afflicted with the gout, his left foot reclined on a stool; and the attitude developed, despite of a lamb-wool stocking, the remains of an exceedingly good leg.

As Gentleman George was a person of majestic dignity among the Knights of the Cross, we trust we shall not be thought irreverent in applying a few

of the words by which the foresaid *Morning Chronicle* depicted his Majesty, on the day he laid the first stone of his father's monument, to the description of Gentleman George.

"He had on a handsome blue coat, and a white waistcoat;" moreover, "he laughed most good-humouredly," as, turning to Augustus Tomlinson, he saluted him with—

"So, this is the youngster you present to us—Welcome to the Jolly Angler! Give us thy hand, young sir—I shall be happy to blow a cloud with thee."

"With all due submission," said Mr. Tomlinson, "I think it may first be as well to introduce my pupil and friend to his future companions."

"You speak like a bary cove," cried Gentleman George, still squeezing our hero's hand; and, turning round in his elbow-chair, he pointed to each member, as he severally introduced his guests to Paul:

"Here," said he,—"here's a fine chap at my right hand—the person thus designated was a thin military-looking figure, in a shabby riding frock, and with a commanding, bold, swelling countenance, a little the worse for wine—here's a fine chap for you; Fighting Attie we calls him; he's a devil on the road. 'Halt—deliver—most and shall—can't and shan't—do as I bid you, or go to the devil,'—that's all Fighting Attie's palaver; and, beneath, it has a wonderful way of coming to the point! A famous cull is my friend Attie—an old soldier—has seen the world, and knows what is what; has lots of gossipation, and devil a bit of blarney. However, ever, the highflyers doesn't like him; and when he takes people's money, he need not be quite so cross about it!—Attie, let me introduce a new pal to you." Paul made his bow.

"Stand at ease, man!" quoth the veteran, without taking the pipe from his mouth

Gentleman George then continued; and, after pointing out four or five of the company (among whom our hero discovered, to his surprise, his old friends, Mr. Eustace Fitzherbert and Mr. William Howard Russell, came, at length, to one with a very red face, and a lusty frame of body. "That gentleman," said he, "is Scarlet Jen; a dangerous fellow for a press, though he says he likes robbing alone now, for a general press is not half such a good thing as it used to be formerly. You have no idea what a hand at disguising himself Scarlet Jen is. He has an old wig which he generally does business in; and you would not go far to know him again, when he conceals himself under the wig. Oh, he's a precious rogue, is Scarlet Jen!—As for the cove on t'other side," continued the host of the Jolly Angler, pointing to Long Ned, "all I can say of him, good, bad, or indifferent, is, that he has an unkimmon fine head of hair: and now, youngster, as you knows him, spose you goes and sits by him, and he'll introduce you to the rest; for, split my wig! (Gentleman George was a bit of a swarerer) if I ben't tired, and so here's to your health; and if so be at your name's Paul, may you always rob *Peter** in order to pay *Paul*!"

This witicism of mine host's being exceedingly well received, Paul went, amidst the general laughter, to take possession of the vacant seat beside Long Ned. That tall gentleman, who had hitherto been close-compelling (as Homer calls Jupiter) in profound silence, now turned to Paul with the warmest cordiality, declared himself everjoyed to meet his old friend once more, and congratulated him alike on his escape from Bridewell, and his admission to the councils of Gentleman George. But Paul, mindful of that exhortation of "prudence" on the

* *Peter*: a portmanteau.

part of Mr. Pepper, by which he had been left to his fate and the mercy of Justice Burnflat, received his advances very unflinchingly. This coolness so incensed Ned, who was naturally choleric, that he turned his back on our hero, and being of an aristocratic spirit, muttered something about "upstart, and vulgar clyfakers being admitted to the company of swell tobymen." This murmur called all Paul's blood into his cheek; for though he had been punished as a clyfaker (or pickpocket), nobody knew better than Long Ned whether or not he was innocent; and a reproach from him came therefore with double injustice and severity. In his wrath, he seized Mr. Pepper by the ear, and, telling him he was a shabby scoundrel, challenged him to fight.

So pleasing an invitation not being announced *sotto voce*, but in a tone suited to the importance of the proposition, every one around heard it; and before Long Ned could answer, the full voice of Gentleman George thundered forth—

"Keep the peace there, you youngster! What! are you just admitted into our merry-makings, and must you be wrangling already? Harkye, gemmen, I have been plagued enough with your quarrels before now, and the first cove as breaks the present quiet of the Jolly Angler, shall be turned out neck and crop—shan't he, Attie?"

"Right about, march," said the hero.

"Ay, that's the word, Attie," said Gentleman George. "And now, Mr. Pepper, if there be any ill blood 'twixt you and the lad there, wash it away in a bumper of bingle, and let's hear no more whatsoever about it."

"I'm willing," cried Long Ned, with the deferential air of a courtier, and holding out his hand to Paul. Our hero, being somewhat abashed by the novelty of his situation and the

rebuke of Gentleman George, accepted, though with some reluctance, the proffered courtesy.

Order being thus restored, the conversation of the convivialists began to assume a most fascinating bias. They talked with infinite *goût* of the sums they had levied on the public, and the speculations they had committed for what one called the "*good of the community*," and another, the "*established order*,"—meaning themselves. It was easy to see in what school the discerning Augustus Tomlinson had learned the value of words.

There was something edifying in hearing the rascals! So nice was their language, and so honest their enthusiasm for their own interests, you might have imagined you were listening to a coterie of cabinet ministers conferring on taxes, or debating on perquisites.

"Long may the *Commons* flourish!" cried punning Georgie, filling his glass; "it is by the commons we're fed, and may they never know cultivation!"

"Three times three!" shouted Long Ned: and the toast was drunk as Mr. Pepper proposed.

"A little moderate cultivation of the commons, to speak frankly," said Augustus Tomlinson modestly, "might not be amiss; for it would decoy people into the belief that they might travel safely; and, after all, a hedge or a barley-field is as good for us as a barren heath, where we have no shelter if once pursued!"

"You talks nonsense, you spooney!" cried a robber of note, called Bagshot; who, being aged, and having been a lawyer's footboy, was sometimes denominated "Old Bags." "You talks nonsense; these innowating ploughs are the ruin of us. Every blade of corn in a common is an encroachment on the constitution and rights of the gemmen highwaymen. I'm old, and mayn't live to see these things; but, mark my words, a time will come

when a man may go from Lunnun to Johnny Green's without losing a penny by one of us; when Hunslow will be safe, and Finckley secure. My eyes, what a sad thing for us that 'll be!"

The venerable old man became suddenly silent, and his tears started to his eyes. Gentleman George had a great horror of blue devils, and particularly disliked all disagreeable subjects.

"Thunder and coons, Old Bags!" quoth mine host of the Jolly Angler, "this will never do; we're all met here to be merry, and not to listen to your melancholly lamentations. I say, Ned Pepper, spouse you tips us a song, and I'll beat time with my knuckles."

Long Ned, taking the pipe from his mouth, attempted, like Walter Scott's Lady Hester, one or two pretty excuses; these being drowned by an universal shout, the handsome paragon gave the following song, to the tune of "Time has not thinned my flowing hair."

LONG NED'S SONG.

1.

Oh, if my hands adhere to cash,
My gloves at least are clean,
And money buys this costly flesh
In spencer clothes less seen.

2.

Sweet Fubbin, since your coffers must
A flood of means collect,
Oh! caution it not to spend the dust
To such a charming thief!

3.

I never owned a single coach
But with a horse and six;
And though you might my *coaches* reproach,
You never could my *hair*.

4.

John Bull, who loves a harmless joke,
Is apt at me to grin,
But when he comes with laughing folk,
Unless they laugh and win!

5.

John Bull has money in his box;
And though his wit's divine,
Yet let me laugh at Johnny's nose—
And John may laugh at mine!"

"And John may laugh at mine, excellent!" cried Gentleman George, lighting his pipe and winking at Attie, "I hear as how you be a famous fellow with the lasses."

Ned smiled and answered,— "No man should boast; but —" Pepper paused significantly, and then glancing at Attie, said—"Talking of lasses, it is my turn to knock down a gentleman for a song, and I knock down Fighting Attie."

"I never sing," said the warrior.

"Treason, treason," cried Pepper. "It is the law, and you must obey the law;—so begin."

"It is true, Attie," said Gentleman George.

There was no appeal from the honest publican's fiat; so, in a quick and concise manner, it being Attie's favourite dogma, that the least said is the soonest mended, the warrior sung as follows:—

FIGHTING ATTIE'S SONG.

Air.—"He was famed for deeds of arms."

"Rise at six—dine at two—
Rub your man without ado—
Such my maxims, if you doubt,
Their wisdom, to the right about!"

(Singing to a certain gentleman on the room-side of the table to send up the brandy basin.)

"Pass round the bingos,—of a gun,
You musky, dinky, dinky gun!"

(The same gentleman, in a hoarse voice.)

"Attie—the bingos' now with me,
I can't resign it yet, d'ye see!"

(Attie, raising the bowl.)

"Resign, resign it, cease your dust!"

(If raising it away, and screwing up, passing the bowl to the gentleman.)

"You have resign'd it—and you must."
coo-coo.

"You have resign'd it—and you must."

* Much of whatever amusement might be occasioned by the not very tractable nature of certain eminent characters in

While the chorus, laughing at the discomfited tippler, yelled forth the emphatic words of the heroic Attie, that personage emptied the brandy at a draught, resumed his pipe, and, in as few words as possible, called on Bagshot for a song. The excellent old highwayman, with great diffidence, obeyed the request, cleared his throat, and struck off with a ditty somewhat to the tune of "The Old Woman."

OLD BAGS' SONG.

"Are the days then gone, when on Hounslow Heath
We flash'd our bags?
When the stoutest basins quail'd beneath
The voice of Bags?
Ne'er was my work half undone, lost
I should be nabb'd;
Slow was old Bags, but he never ceased
'Till the whole was grabb'd.

CHORUS.

'Till the whole was grabb'd.

When the slow coach paused, and the
gemen storm'd,
I bore the brunt—
And the only sound which my grave lips
form'd
Was 'blunt'—still 'blunt'!
Oh, those jovial days are ne'er forgot!—
But the tape lags—
When I bet's dead, you'll drink one pot
To poor old Bags!

CHORUS.

To poor old Bags!"

"Ay, that we will, my dear Bagshot," cried Gentleman George, affectionately; but, observing a tear in the fine old fellow's eye, he added, "Cheer up. What, ho! cheer up! Times will improve, and Providence may yet send us one good year, when you shall be as well off as ever! You

shakes your poll. Well, don't be humbugged, but knock down a gemman."

Dashing away the drop of sensibility, the veteran knocked down Gentleman George himself.

"Oh, dang it!" said George, with an air of dignity "I ought to skip, since I find the lush; but howsom-ever here goes."

GENTLEMAN GEORGE'S SONG.

Air.—"Old King Cole."

"I be's the cove—the merry old cove,
Of whose max all the rufflers sing.
And a lushing cove, I think, by Jove,
Is as great as a nobber king!

CHORUS.

Is as great as a nobber king.

Whatever the noise as is made by the boys,
At the bar as they lush away;
The devil a noise my peace aloys,
As long as the rascals pay!

CHORUS.

As long as the rascals pay!

What if I ticks my stones and my bricks
With mortar I takes from the mobbish?
All who can feel for the public weal,
Likes the public house to be bobbish.

CHORUS.

Likes the public-house to be bobbish."

"There, gemmen!" said the publican, stopping short, "that's the pith of the matter, and split my wig but I'm short of breath now. So, send round the brandy, Augustus: you sly dog, you keeps it all to yourself."

By this time the whole conclave were more than half-as over, or, as Augustus Tomlinson expressed it, "their more austere qualities were relaxed by a pleasing and innocent indulgence." Paul's eyes reeled, and his tongue ran loose. By degrees the room swam round, the faces of his comrades altered, the countenance of Old Bags assumed an awful and menacing air. He thought Long Ned

this part of our work, when first published, like all political allusions, loses point and becomes obscure as the applications cease to be familiar. It is already necessary, perhaps, to say, that Fighting Attie herein typifies or illustrates the Duke of Wellington's abrupt dismissal of Mr. Huskisson.

insulted him, and that Old Bags took the part of the assailant, doubled his fists, and threatened to put the plaintiff's nob into chancery, if he disturbed the peace of the meeting. Various other imaginary evils beset him. He thought he had robbed a mail coach in company with Pepper; that Tomlinson informed against him, and that Gentleman George ordered him to be hanged; in short, he laboured under a temporary delirium, occasioned by a sudden reverse of fortune—from water to brandy; and the last thing of which he retained any recollection, before he sunk under the table, in company with Long Ned, Scarlet Jen, and Old Bags, was, the bearing his part in the bar-room, of what appeared to him a chorus of last dying speeches and confessions, but what in reality was a song made in honour of Gentleman George, and sung by his grateful guests as a finale to the festivities. It ran thus:—

THE ROBBER'S GRAND TOAST.

* A tumbler of blue ruin, fill, fill for me!
 Red lips these as likes it may drain.
 But whatever the 'ud, it a bumper must be.
 If we never drinks a bumper again!
 Now—now in the crib, where a ruffler may lie,
 Without fear that the traps should distress him,
 With a drop in the mouth, and a drop in the eye,
 Here's to Gentleman George—God bless him!

God bless him—God bless him!
 Here's to Gentleman George—God bless him!

'Mong the pals of the Prince, I have heard
 It's the ge,
 Before they have tippled enough,
 To smarten their punch with the best
 European,
 More coaxish to render the stuff!
 I boast not such lush!—but whoever his
 glass
 Does not like, I'll be hang'd if I press
 him!
 Upstanning my kiddies—round, round let
 it pass!
 Here's to Gentleman George—God bless
 him!
 God bless him—God bless him!
 Here's to Gentleman George—God bless
 him!

See—see—the fine fellow grows weak on the
 stump,
 Assist him, ye rascals, to stand!
 Why, ye stir not a peg!—Are you all in the
 dumps?—
 Fighting Attie, ge, lend him a hand!"

(The robbers crowd around Gentleman
 George, each, under pretence of sup-
 porting him, pulling him first one
 way and then another.)

Come, lean upon me—at your service I am!
 Get away from his elbow, you whelp!—him
 You'll only upset—them 'ere fellows but
 shan!
 Here's to Gentleman George—God help
 him!
 God help him—God help him!—
 Here's to Gentleman George—God help
 him!"

CHAPTER XI.

"I boast no song in magic wonders rife.
 But yet, O Nature! is there naught to prize,
 Familiar in thy bosom scenes of life?
 And dwells in daylight truth's salubrious skies
 No form with which the soul may sympathise?
 Young, innocent, on whose sweet forehead mild
 The parted ringlet shone in simplest guise,
 An inmate in the house of Albert smiled,
 Or blest his noonday walk—she was his only child."

Gertrude of Wyoming.

O TIME, thou hast played strange tricks with us! and we bless the stars that made us a novelist, and permit us now to retaliate. Leaving Paul to the instructions of Augustus Tomlinson and the festivities of the Jolly Angler, and suffering him, by slow but sure degrees, to acquire the graces and the reputation of the accomplished and perfect appropriator of other men's possessions, we shall pass over the lapse of years with the same heedless rapidity with which they have glided over us, and summon our reader to a very different scene from those which would be likely to greet his eyes, were he following the adventures of our new Telemachus. Nor wilt thou, dear reader, whom we make the umpire between ourself and those who never read—the critics;—thou who hast, in the true spirit of gentle breeding, gone with us among places where the novelty of the scene has, we fear, scarcely atoned for the coarseness, not giving thyself the airs of a dainty abigail,—not prating, lacquey-like, on the low company thou hast met;—nor wilt thou, dear and friendly reader, have cause to dread that we shall weary thy patience by a "damnable iteration" of the same localities. Pausing for a moment to glance over the divisions of our story, which lies before us like a map, we feel that we may

promise in future to conduct thee among aspects of society more familiar to thy habits;—where events flow to their allotted gulf through landscapes of more pleasing variety, and among tribes of a more luxurious civilisation.

Upon the banks of one of fair England's fairest rivers, and about fifty miles distant from London, still stands an old-fashioned abode, which we shall here term Warlock Manor-house. It is a building of brick, varied by stone copings, and covered in great part with ivy and jasmine. Around it lie the ruins of the elder part of the fabric, and these are sufficiently numerous in extent, and important in appearance, to testify that the mansion was once not without pretensions to the magnificent. These remains of power, some of which bear date as far back as the reign of Henry the Third, are sanctioned by the character of the country immediately in the vicinity of the old manor-house. A vast tract of waste land, interspersed with groves of antique pollards, and here and there irregular and sinuous ridges of green mound, betoken to the experienced eye the evidence of a dismantled chase or park, which must originally have been of no common dimensions. On one side of the house the lawn slopes towards the river, divided from a

terrace, which forms the most important embellishment of the pleasure grounds, by that fence to which has been given the ingenious and significant name of "be-ha!" A few scattered trees of great growth are the sole obstacles that break the view of the river, which has often seemed to us, at that particular passage of its course, to glide with untroubled calmness and serenity. On the opposite side of the stream there is a range of steep hills, cultivated for nothing more remote than their property of imparting to the flocks that browse upon their short, and seemingly stunted herbage a flavour peculiarly grateful to the lovers of that pastoral animal which changes its name into mutton after its demise. Upon these hills the vestige of human habitation is not visible, and at times, when no boat defiles the lonely smoothness of the river, and the evening has stilled the sounds of labour and of life, we know few scenes so utterly tranquil, so steeped in quiet, as that which is presented by the old, quaint-fashioned house and its antique grounds,—the crooked lawn, the elms, and (to speak truly, though disparagingly) the somewhat sluggish river, together with the large hills (to which we know, from simple, though metaphysical causes, how entire an idea of quiet, and immortality, peculiarly attaches itself), and the white flocks—these most peaceful of God's creatures,—that in fleecy clusters stud the ascent.

In Warlock House, at the time we refer to, lived a gentleman of the name of Brandon. He was a widower, and had attained his fifth year, without meeting much regret on the part, or feeling much anxiety for the future. In a word, Joseph Brandon was one of those cheerful, equanimous, indifferent men, by whom a thought upon any subject is never resorted to without a very urgent necessity. He

was good natured, inoffensive, and weak; and if he was not an incomparable citizen, he was, at least, an excellent vegetable. He was of a family of high antiquity, and formerly of considerable note. For the last four or five generations, however, the proprietors of Warlock House, gradually losing something alike from their acres and their consequence, had left to their descendants no higher rank than that of a small country squire. One had been a Jacobite, and had drunk out half a dozen farms in honour of Charley over the water;—Charley over the water was no very dangerous person, but Charley over the wine was rather more ruinous. The next Brandon had been a fox-hunter, and fox-hunters live as largely as patriotic politicians. Pausanias tells us, that the same people who were the most notorious for their love of wine, were also the most notorious for their negligence of affairs. Times are not much altered since Pausanias wrote, and the remark holds as good with the English as it did with the Phigæli. After this Brandon came one who, though he did not scorn the sportsman, rather assumed the fine gentleman. He married an heiress, who, of course, assisted to ruin him: wishing no assistance in so pleasing an occupation, he overturned her (*perhaps not on purpose*), in a new sort of carriage which he was learning to drive, and the good lady was killed on the spot. She left the fine gentleman two sons, Joseph Brandon, the present theme, and a brother some years younger. The elder, being of a fitting age, was sent to school, and somewhat escaped the contagion of the paternal mansion. But the younger Brandon, having only reached his fifth year at the time of his mother's demise, was retained at home. Whether he was handsome, or clever, or impertinent, or like his father about the eyes (that greatest of all

merits), we know not; but the widower became so fond of him, that it was at a late period, and with great reluctance, that he finally intrusted him to the providence of a school.

Among harlots, and gamblers, and lords, and sharpers, and gentlemen of the guards, together with their frequent accompaniments—guards of the gentlemen—viz. bailiffs, William Brandon passed the first stage of his boyhood. He was about thirteen when he was sent to school; and being a boy of remarkable talents, he recovered lost time so well, that when, at the age of nineteen, he adjourned to the university, he had scarcely resided there a single term before he had borne off two of the highest prizes awarded to academical merit. From the university he departed on the "grand tour," at that time thought so necessary to complete the gentleman: he went in company with a young nobleman, whose friendship he had won at the university, stayed abroad more than two years, and on his return he settled down to the profession of the law.

Meanwhile his father died, and his fortune, as a younger brother, being literally next to nothing, and the family estate (for his brother was not *willing* to assist him) being terribly involved, it was believed that he struggled for some years with very embarrassed and penurious circumstances. During this interval of his life, however, he was absent from London, and by his brother supposed to have returned to the Continent: at length, it seems, he profited by a renewal of his friendship with the young nobleman who had accompanied him abroad, reappeared in town, and obtained, through his noble friend, one or two legal appointments of reputable emolument: soon afterwards he got a brief on some cause where a major had been raising a corps to his brother officer,

with the better consent of the brother-officer's wife than of the brother officer himself. Brandon's abilities here, for the first time in his profession, found an adequate vent; his reputation seemed made at once, he rose rapidly in his profession, and, at the time we now speak of, he was sailing down the full tide of fame and wealth, the envy and the oracle of all young Templars and barristers, who, having been starved themselves for ten years, began now to calculate on the possibility of starving their clients. At an early period in his career he had, through the good offices of the nobleman we have mentioned, obtained a seat in the House of Commons; and though his eloquence was of an order much better suited to the bar than the senate, he had nevertheless acquired a very considerable reputation in the latter, and was looked upon by many as likely to win to the same brilliant fortunes as the courtly Mansfield—a great man, whose political principles and urbane address Brandon was supposed especially to affect as his own model. Of unblemished integrity in public life—for, as he supported all things that exist with the most unbending rigidity, he could not be accused of inconsistency—William Brandon was (as we have said in a former place of unhappy memory to our hero) esteemed in private life the most honourable, the most moral, even the most austere of men; and his grave and stern repute on this score, joined to the dazzle of his eloquence and forensic powers, had baffled in great measure the rancour of party hostility, and obtained for him a character for virtues almost as high and as enviable as that which he had acquired for abilities.

While William was thus treading a noted and an honourable career, his elder brother, who had married into a clergyman's family, and soon lost his consort, had with his only

child, a daughter named Lucy, resided in the paternal mansion in undisturbed obscurity. The discreditable character and habits of the preceding lords of Warlock, which had sunk their respectability in the county, as well as curtailed their property, had rendered the surrounding gentry little anxious to cultivate the intimacy of the present proprietor; and the heavy mant and retired manners of Joseph Brandon were not calculated to counterbalance the faults of his forefathers, nor to restate the name of Brandon in its ancient popularity and esteem. Though dull and little cultivated, the squire was not without his "proper pride," he attempted not to intrude himself where he was unwelcome, avoided county meetings and county balls, smoked his pipe with the parson, and not unoften with the surgeon and the solicitor, and entrusted his daughter Lucy to educate herself with the help of the parson's wife, and to open (for Nature was more favourable to her than Art) into the very prettiest girl that the whole county—at that time could boast of. Never did glass give back a more lovely image than that of Lucy Brandon at the age of nineteen. Her auburn hair fell in the richest luxuriance over a brow never ruffled, and a cheek where the blood never slept; with every instant the colour varied, and at every variation that smooth, pure virgin cheek seemed still more lovely than before. She had the most beautiful laugh that one who need music could imagine,—silver, son, and yet so full of joy! all her movements, as the old parson said, seemed to keep time to that laugh; for mirth made a great part of her innocent and childish temper; and yet the mirth was feminine, never loud, nor like that of young ladies who had received the last knock at Highgate seminary. Everything

joyous affected her, and at once;—air,—flowers,—sunshine,—butterflies. Unlike heroines in general, she very seldom cried, and she saw nothing charming in having the vapours. But she never looked so beautiful as in sleep! and as the light breath came from her parted lips, and the ivory lids closed over those eyes which only in sleep were silent—and her attitude in her sleep took that ineffable grace belonging solely to childhood, or the fresh youth into which childhood merges,—she was just what you might imagine a sleeping Margaret, before that most simple and gentle of all a poet's visions of womanhood had met with Faust, or her slumbers been ruffled with a dream of love.

We cannot say much for Lucy's intellectual acquirements; she could thanks to the parson's wife, spell in differently well, and write a tolerable hand; she made preserves, and some times riddles—it was more difficult to question the excellence of the former than to answer the queries of the latter. She worked to the admiration of all who knew her, and we beg leave to say that we deem that "an excellent thing in woman." She made caps for herself and gowns for the poor, and now and then she accomplished the more literary labour of a stray novel that had wandered down to the Manor-house, or an abridgment of ancient history, in which was omitted every thing but the proper names. To these attainments she added a certain measure of skill upon the spinnet, and the power of singing old songs with the richest and sweetest voice that ever made any's eyes moisten, or one's heart beat.

Her moral qualities were more fully developed than her mental. She was the kindest of human beings; the very dog that had never seen her before, knew that truth at the first glance and lost no time in making

her acquaintance. The goodness of her heart reposed upon her face like sunshine, and the old wife at the lodge said poetically and truly of the effect it produced, that "one felt warm when one looked on her." If we could abstract from the description a certain chilling transparency, the following exquisite verses of a forgotten poet* might express the purity and lustre of her countenance:—

"Her face was like the milky way & the sky.
A meeting of gentle lights without a name."

She was surrounded by pets of all kinds, ugly and handsome, from Ralph the raven to Beauty the pheasant, and from Bob, the sheep-dog without a tail, to Beau, the Blenheim with blue ribands round his neck; all things loved her, and she loved all things. It seemed doubtful at that time whether she would ever have sufficient steadiness and strength of character. Her beauty and her character appeared so essentially womanlike—soft, yet lively, buoyant, yet caressing,—that you could scarcely place in her that moral dependence that you might in a character less amiable, but less yielding and feminine. Time, however, and circumstance, which alter and harden, were to decide whether the inward nature did not possess some latent, and yet undiscovered properties. Such was Lucy Brandon, in the year —, and in that year, on a beautiful autumnal evening, we first introduce her personally to our readers.

She was sitting on a garden seat by the river side with her father, who was deliberately conning the evening paper of a former week, and gravely reasoning the ancient news with the inspirations of that weed which so bitterly excited the royal indignation of our British Solomon. It happens, unfortunately for us,—for outward peculiarities are scarcely worthy the dignity to which comely, whether in

the drama or the narrative, aspires,—that Squire Brandon possessed so few distinguishing traits of mind, that he leaves his delineator little whereby to designate him, save a confused and parenthetical habit of speech, by which he very often appeared to those who did not profit by long experience, or close observation, to say exactly, and somewhat ludicrously, that which he did not mean to convey.

"I say, Lucy," observed Mr. Brandon, but without lifting his eyes from the paper; "I say, corn has fallen—think of that, girl, think of that! These times, in my opinion, ay, and in the opinion of wiser heads than mine, though I do not mean to say that I have not some experience in these matters, which is more than can be said of all our neighbours, are very curious, and even dangerous."

"Indeed, papa!" answered Lucy.

"And I say, Lucy, dear," resumed the squire after a short pause, "there has been (and very strange it is, too, when one considers the crowded neighbourhood—Bless me! what times these are!) a shocking murder committed upon (the tobacco-stopper—there it is)—think, you know, girl—just by Epping!—an old gentleman!"

"Dear, how shocking! by whom?"

"Ay, that's the question! The coroner's inquest has (what a blessing it is to live in a civilised country, where a man does not die without knowing the why and the wherefore!) sat on the body, and declared (it is very strange, but they don't seem to have made much discovery; for why I we knew as much before,) that the body was found (it was found on the floor, Lucy,) murdered; murderer or murderers (in the bureau, which was broken open, they found the money left quite untouched,)—unknown!"

Here there was again a slight pause, and passing to another side of the paper, Mr. Brandon resumed in a quicker tone,—

"Ha! well, now this is odd! But he's a damned clever fellow, Lucy! that brother of mine has come in a very honourable manner too, which I am sure is highly creditable to the family, though he has not taken too much notice of me lately;—a circumstance which, considering I am his elder brother, I am a little angry at!—disappointed himself in a speech, remarking, the paper says, for its great length—I wonder, by the by, whether William could get me that agacement money! 'tis a heavy thing to lose; but going to law, as my poor father used to say, is like fishing for guppies (not a bad little fish, *we can have some for supper, with quennies*)—acknowledged, as well as its splendid and overpowering—(I do love Will for keeping up the family honour; I am sure it is more than I have done—though he's—disgraceful!"

"And on what subject has he been speaking, papa?"

"Oh, a very fine subject: what you call a—(it is astonishing that in this country there should be such a wish for taking away people's characters, which, for my part, I don't see is a bit more entertaining than when you are always doing—playing with those stupid things—bad!)"

"But is not my uncle, William, coming down to see us? He promised to do so, and it made you quite happy, papa, for two days. I hope he will not disappoint you; and I am sure that it is not his fault if he ever comes to neglect us. He spoke of you to me, when I saw him, in the kindest and most affectionate manner. I am sure, my dear father, that he loves you very much."

"Ahem!" said the squire, evidently flattered, and yet not convinced. "My brother Will is a very smart fellow, and I make no—my dear little girl—question, but that—(when you have seen as much of the world as I have, you will grow sus-

picious.)—he thought that any good word said of me to my daughter would—(you see, Lucy, I am as clear sighted as my neighbours, though I don't give myself all their airs; which I very well might do, considering my great great great grandfather, Hugo Brandon, had a hand in detecting the gunpowder plot,)—be told to me again!"

"Nay, but I am quite sure my uncle never spoke of you to me with that intention."

"Possibly, my dear child; but when (the evenings are much shorter than they were) did you talk with your uncle about me?"

"Oh, when staying with Mrs. Warner, in London; to be sure, it is six years ago; but I remember it perfectly. I recollect, in particular, that he spoke of you very handsomely to Lord Maulverer, who dined with him one evening when I was there, and when my uncle was so kind as to take me to the play. I was afterwards quite sorry that he was so good natured, as he lost—(you remember I told you the story)—a very valuable watch."

"Ay, ay, I remember all about that, and so,—how long friendship lasts with some people!—Lord Maulverer dined with William! What a fine thing it is for a man—(it is what I never did, indeed, I like being what they call 'Cock of the Walk'—let me see, now I think of it, Pillum comes to night to play a bit at back-gammon)—to make friends with a great man early in your Will did not do it very early, poor fellow! he struggled first with a great deal of sorrow—hardship (that is—) life! It is many years now, since Will has been hand and glove with my (tis a bit of a puppy) Lord Maulverer,—what did you think of his lordship?"

"Of Lord Maulverer? Indeed I scarcely observed him; but he seemed a handsome man, and was very polite. Mrs. Warner said he had been a very

wicked person when he was young, but he seems good natured enough now, papa."

"By the by," said the squire, "his lordship has just been made—this new industry seems very unlike the old, which rather puzzles me; for I think it my duty, d'ye see, Lucy, always to vote for his Majesty's government, especially seeing that old Hugo Brandon had a hand in detecting the gunpowder plot; and it is a little odd, at least, at first, to think that good now, which one has always before been thinking abominable) Lord Lieutenant of the county."

"Lord Mauleverer our Lord Lieutenant!"

"Yes, child; and since his lordship is such a friend of my brother's, I should think, considering especially what an old family in the county we are,—not that I wish to intrude myself where I am not thought as fine as the rest,—that he would be more attentive to us than Lord —— was; but that, my dear Lucy, puts me in mind of Pillum, and so, perhaps, you would like to walk to the parson's as it is a fine evening. John shall come for you at nine o'clock *with* (the moon is not up then) the lantern."

Leaning on his daughter's willing arm, the good old man then rose and walked homeward; and so soon as she had wheeled round his easy chair, placed the backgammon-board on the table, and wished the old gentleman an easy victory over his expected antagonist the apothecary, Lucy tied down her bonnet, and took her way to the rectory.

When she arrived at the clerical mansion, and entered the drawing-room, she was surprised to find the parson's wife, a good, homely, lethargic old lady, run up to her, seemingly in a state of great nervous agitation, and crying.

"Oh, my dear Miss Brandon! which way did you come? Did you

meet nobody by the road? Oh, I am so frightened! Such an accident to poor dear Dr. Sloperton! Stopped in the king's highway, robbed of some of the money he had just received from Farmer Slowforth: if it had not been for that dear angel, good, young man, God only knows whether I might not have been a disconsolate widow by this time!"

While the affectionate matron was thus running on, Lucy's eye glancing round the room discovered in an arm-chair the round and oily little person of Dr. Sloperton, with a countenance from which all the carnation hues, save in one circular excrescence on the nasal member, that was left, like the last rose of summer, blooming alone, were faded into an aspect of miserable pallor: the little man tried to conjure up a smile while his wife was narrating his misfortune, and to mutter forth some syllable of unconcern; but he looked, for all his bravado, so exceedingly scared, that Lucy would, despite herself, have laughed outright, had not her eye rested upon the figure of a young man who had been seated beside the reverend gentleman, but who had risen at Lucy's entrance, and who now stood gazing upon her intently, but with an air of great respect. Blushing deeply, and involuntarily, she turned her eyes hastily away, and approaching the good doctor, made her inquiries into the present state of his nerves, in a graver tone than she had a minute before imagined it possible that she should have been enabled to command.

"Ah! my good young lady," said the doctor, squeezing her hand, "I—may, I may say the church—for am I not its minister?—was in imminent danger:—but this excellent gentleman prevented the sacrilege, at least in great measure. I only lost some of my dues—my rightful dues—for which I console myself with thinking

that the infamous and abandoned villain will suffer hereafter."

"There cannot be the least doubt of that," said the young man: "had he only robbed the mail coach, or broken into a gentleman's house, the offence might have been expiable; but to rob a clergyman, and a rector, too!—Oh, the sacrilegious dog!"

"Your warmth does you honour, sir," said the doctor, beginning now to recover; "and I am very proud to have made the acquaintance of a gentleman of such truly religious opinions!"

"Ah!" cried the stranger, "my feeble, sir—if I may so speak—is a sort of enthusiastic fervour for the Protestant Establishment. Nay, sir, I never come across the very nave of the church, without feeling an indecorable emotion—a kind of sympathy, as it were,—with—with—you understand me, sir—I fear I express myself ill."

"Not at all, not at all!" exclaimed the doctor: "such sentiments are uncommon in one so young."

"Sir, I learned them early in life from a friend and preceptor of mine, Mr. Mac Grawler, and I trust they may continue with me to my dying day."

Here the doctor's servant entered with one borrow a phrase from the novel of " * * * " the tea-coppage, and Mrs. Sloperton bestaking herself to its superintendence, inquired, with more compunction than hitherto had belonged to her demeanour, what sort of a looking creature the ruffian was!

"I will tell you, my dear, I will tell you, Miss Lucy, all about it. I was walking home from Mr. Slowford's, with his money in my pocket, thinking, my love, of buying you that tapez cross you wished to have."

"Dear good man!" cried Mrs. Sloperton, "what a felix it must have been to rob so excellent a creature!"

"And," resumed the doctor, "it

also occurred to me, that the Madeira was nearly out—the Madeira, I mean, with the red seal; and I was thinking it might not be amiss to devote part of the money to buy six dozen more; and the remainder, my love, which would be about one pound eighteen, I thought I would divide,—for he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord!—among the thirty poor families on the common: that is, if they behaved well, and the apples in the back garden were not feloniously abstracted!"

"Excellent, charitable man!" ejaculated Mrs. Sloperton.

"While I was thus meditating, I lifted my eyes, and saw before me two men; one of prodigious height, and with a great profusion of hair about his shoulders; the other was smaller, and wore his hat slouched over his face; it was a very large hat. My attention was arrested by the singularity of the tall person's hair, and while I was smiling at its luxuriance, I heard him say to his companion,—'Well, Augustus, as you are such a moral dog, he is in your line, not mine: so I leave him to you.'—Little did I think those words related to me. No sooner were they uttered, than the tall rascal leaped over a gate and disappeared; the other fellow then marching up to me, very smoothly asked me the way to the church, and while I was explaining to him to turn first to the right and then to the left, and so on—for the best way is, you know, exceedingly crooked—the hypocritical scoundrel seized me by the collar, and cried out—'Your money, or your life!' I do assure you, that I never trembled so much; not, my dear Miss Lucy, so much for my own sake, as for the sake of the thirty poor families on the common, whose wants it had been my intention to relieve. I gave up the money, finding my prayers and expostulations were in vain, and the dog then, brandishing

over my head an enormous bludgeon, said—what abominable language!—‘I think, doctor, I shall put an end to an existence derogatory to your self and useless to others.’ At that moment the young gentleman bled me sprang over the very gate by which the tall ruffian had disappeared, and cried, ‘Hold, villain!’ On seeing my deliverer, the coward started back, and plunged into a neighbouring wood. The good young gentleman pursued him for a few minutes, but then returning to my aid, conducted me home; and as we used to say at school:—

“*Te rediisse incolumem gaudeo.*”

Which, being interpreted, means,—(sir, excuse a pun, I am sure so great a friend to the church understands Latin)—that I am very glad to get back safe to my tea. He! he! And now, Miss Lucy, you must thank that young gentleman for having saved the life of your pastoral teacher, which act will no doubt be remembered at the Great Day!”

As Lucy, looking towards the stranger, said something in compliment, she observed a vague, and, as it were, covert smile upon his countenance, which immediately, and as if by sympathy, conjured one to her own. The hero of the adventure, however, in a very grave tone, replied to her compliment, at the same time bowing profoundly:—

“Mention it not, madam! I were unworthy of the name of a Briton, and a man, could I pass the highway without relieving the distress, or lightening the burthen, of a fellow-creature. And,” continued the stranger, after a momentary pause, colouring while he spoke, and concluding in the high-toned gallantry of the day, “methinks I were sufficient reward, had I saved the whole church, instead of one of its most valuable members, to receive the thanks of a lady, whom I might

reasonably take for one of those celestial beings to whom we have been piously taught that the church is especially the care!”

Though there might have been something really ridiculous in this overstrained compliment, coupled as it was with the preservation of Dr. Slopperton, yet, coming from the mouth of one whom Lucy thought the very handsomest person she had ever seen, it appeared to her any thing but absurd; and, for a very long time afterwards, her heart thrilled with pleasure when she remembered that the cheek of the speaker had glowed, and his voice had trembled, as he spoke it.

The conversation now, turning from robbers in particular, dwelt upon robberies in general. It was edifying to hear the honest indignation with which the stranger spoke of the lawless depredators with whom the country, in that day of Macheatha, was infested.

“A pack of infamous rascals!” said he, in a glow; “who attempt to justify their misdeeds by the example of honest men; and who say, that they do no more than is done by lawyers and doctors, soldiers, clergymen, and ministers of state. Pitiful delusion, or rather shameless hypocrisy!”

“It all comes of educating the poor,” said the doctor. “The moment they pretend to judge the conduct of their betters—there’s an end of all order! They see nothing sacred in the laws, though we hang the dogs ever so fast; and the very peers of the land, spiritual and temporal, cease to be venerable in their eyes.”

“Talking of peers,” said Mrs. Slopperton, “I hear that Lord Mauleverer is to pass by this road to-night, on his way to Mauleverer Park. Do you know his lordship, Miss Lucy? he is very intimate with your uncle.”

“I have only seen him once,” answered Lucy.

"Are you sure that his lordship will come this road?" asked the stranger, carefully. "I heard something of it this morning, but did not know it was settled."

"Oh, quite so!" rejoined Mrs. Sloperton. "His lordship's gentleman wrote for post-horses to meet his lordship at Wygham, about three miles on the other side of the village, at ten o'clock to-night. His lordship is very impatient of delay."

"Pray," said the doctor, who had not much hooded this turn in the conversation, and was now "on hospitable cares intent;"—"Pray, sir, if not impertinent, are you visiting, or looking in the neighbourhood; or, will you take a bed with us?"

"You are extremely kind, my dear sir, but I fear I must soon wish you good evening. I have to look after a little property I have some miles hence, which, indeed, brought me down into this part of the world."

"Property!—in what direction, sir, if I may ask?" quoth the doctor; "I know the country for miles."

"Do you, indeed?—where's my property, you say? Why, it is rather difficult to describe it, and it is, after all, a mere trifle; it is only some common-land near the high road, and I came down to try the experiment of *hedging and draining*."

"Tis a good plan, if one has capital, and does not require a speedy return."

"Yes; but one likes a good interest for the loss of principal, and a speedy return is always desirable; although, alas! it is often attended with risk."

"I hope, sir," said the doctor, "if you must leave us so soon, that your property will soon bring you into our neighbourhood."

"You overpowered me with so much unexpected goodness," answered the stranger. "To tell you the truth, nothing can give me greater pleasure

than to meet those again who have once obliged me."

"Whom you have obliged, rather!" cried Mrs. Sloperton, and then added, in a loud whisper to Lucy—"How modest! but it is always so with true courage!"

"I assure you, madam," returned the benevolent stranger, "that I never think twice of the little favours I render my fellow men—my only hope is, that they may be as forgetful as myself."

Charmed with so much unaffected goodness of disposition, the Dr. and Mrs. Sloperton now set up a sort of duet in praise of their guest, after enduring their commendations and compliments for some minutes with much grimace of disavowal and diffidence, the stranger's modesty seemed at last to take pain at the excess of their gratitude; and, accordingly, pointing to the clock, which was within a few minutes of nine, he said—

"I fear, my respected host, and my admired hostess, that I must now leave you; I have far to go."

"But are you yourself not afraid of the highwaymen?" cried Mrs. Sloperton, interrupting him.

"The highwaymen!" said the stranger, smiling: "No! I do not fear them; besides, I have little about me worth robbing."

"Do you superintend your property yourself?" said the doctor, who farmed his own glebe, and who, unwilling to part with so charming a guest, seized him now by the button.

"Superintend it myself!—why not exactly. There is a *badiff*, whose views of things don't agree with mine, and who now and then gives me a good deal of trouble!"

"Then why don't you discharge him altogether?"

"Ah! I wish I could; but 'tis a necessary evil. We landed proprietors, my dear sir, must always be plagued with something of the sort. For my part, I have found those

cursed bailiffs would take away, if they could, all the little property one has been trying to accumulate. But," abruptly changing his manner into one of great softness, "could I not proffer my services and my companionship to this young lady? Would she allow me to conduct her home, and, indeed, stamp this day upon my memory as one of the few delightful ones I have ever known?"

"Thank you, dear sir," said Mrs. Slopperton, answering at once for Lucy: "it is very considerate of you; and I am sure, my love, I could not think of letting you go home alone with old John, after such an adventure to the poor dear doctor."

Lucy began an excuse which the good lady would not hear. But as the servant whom Mr. Brandon was to send with a lantern to attend his daughter home had not arrived, and as Mrs. Slopperton, despite her prepossessions in favour of her husband's deliverer, did not for a moment contemplate his accompanying, without any other attendance, her young friend across the fields at that unseasonable hour, the stranger was forced, for the present, to re-assume his seat: an open harpsichord at one end of the room gave him an opportunity to make some remark upon music, and this introducing an eulogium on Lucy's voice from Mrs. Slopperton, necessarily ended in a request to Miss Brandon to indulge the stranger with a song. Never had Lucy, who was not a shy girl—she was too innocent to be bashful—felt nervous hitherto in singing before a stranger; but now she hesitated and faltered, and went through a whole series of little natural afflictions before she complied with the request. She chose a song composed somewhat after the old English school, which at that time was reviving into fashion. The song, though conveying a sort of conceit, was not, perhaps, altogether without tender-

ness: it was a favourite with Lucy, she scarcely knew why, and ran thus:—

LUCY'S SONG.

"Why sleep, ye gentle flowers, ah, why,
When tender eye is falling,
And starlight drinks the happy sigh
Of winds to fairies calling?"

Calling with low and pining note,
Most like a ringdove chiding,
Or flute faint-heard from distant boat
O'er smoothest waters gliding,

Lo, round you steals the wooing breeze—
Lo, on you falls the dew!
O Sweet, awake, for scarcely these
Can charm while wanting you!

Wake ye not yet—while fast, below
The silver time is fleeing?
O Heart of mine, those flowers but show
Thine own contented being.

The twilight but preserves the bloom,
The sun can but decay;
The warmth that brings the rich perfume,
But steals the life away.

O Heart enjoy thy present calm,
Rest peaceful in the shade,
And dread the sun that gives the balm
To bid the blossom fade."

When Lucy ended, the stranger's praise was less loud than either the doctor's or his lady's; but how far more sweet it was; and for the first time in her life Lucy made the discovery, that eyes can praise as well as lips. For our part, we have often thought that that discovery is an epoch in life.

It was now that Mrs. Slopperton declared her thorough conviction that the stranger himself could sing—"He had that about him," she said, "which made her sure of it."

"Indeed, dear madam," said he, with his usual undefinable half frank, half-latent smile, "my voice is but so-so, and my memory so indifferent, that even in the easiest passages I soon come to a stand. My best notes are in the falsetto, and as for my execution—but we won't talk of that.

"Nay, nay, you are so modest," said Mrs. Slopperton. "I am sure you could outdo us if you would."

"Your command," said the stranger, moving to the harpsichord. "is all sufficient, and since you, madam," turning to Lucy, "have chosen a song after the old school, may I find pardon if I do the same? My selection is, to be sure, from a lawless song book, and is supposed to be a ballad by Robin Hood, or, at least, one of his merry men; a very different sort of outlaws from the knaves who attacked you, are they?"

With this preface, the stranger sung in a wild yet jovial air, with a tolerable voice, the following effusion:—

THE LOVE OF OUR PROFESSION; OR, THE ROBBER'S LIFE.

"On the stream of the World, the Robber's life
Is borne on the blithest wave;

Now it bounces into light in a gladsome stride,
Now it laughs in its hiding cave.

At his maiden's lattice he stays the rein,
Himself, as his courseer proud!
(But still as a wind when it hangs o'er the moon
In the breast of the boding cloud)—

With the clamped bit and the arched crest,
And the eye of a staring deer,
Like valour, frolics most to feet,
Least chaf'd when in career.

Pit slave to a Lord whom all else refuse
To save at its desperate need;
By my truth! I think one whom the world pursues
Hath a right to a gallant steed.

"Away, my beloved, I hear their feet!"
"I show thee a kiss, my fair,
And I promise to bring thee, when next we meet,
A braid for thy sunny hair.

"Hurra! for the brist'ry-bony steed, hurra!"
Thorough bush, thorough brake, go we;
And the day Moon comes in our merry way,
Like our own love—timidly!"

No. 26.

The Parson he rides with a jingling pouch,
How it hisses of the rifled pair?
The Courtier he holds in his guided coach,
How it smacks of a sincere!

The Lawyer revolves in his whirling chaise
Sweet thoughts of a mischief done;
And the Lady that knoweth the card she plays
Is counting her guineas won!

"Ho, Lady!—What, holla, ye sinless men!"
My claim ye can scarce refuse:
For when honest folk live on their neighbours, then
They encroach on the Robber's dues!"

The Lady changed cheek like a bashful maid,
The Lawyer talk'd wondrous fair,
The Parson blasphemed, and the Courtier pray'd,
And the Robber bore off his share.

"Hurra! for the revel! my steed, hurra!"
Thorough bush, thorough brake, go we!
It is ever a virtue, when others pay,
To ruffle it merrily!

Oh! there never was life like the Robber's—as
Jolly, and bold, and free;
And its end—why, a cheer from the crowd below,
And a leap from a leafless tree!"

This very moral lay being ended, Mrs. Slopperton declared it was excellent; though she confessed she thought the sentiments rather loose. Perhaps the gentleman might be induced to favour them with a song of a more refined and modern turn—something sentimental, in short. Glancing towards Lucy, the stranger answered that he only knew one song of the kind Mrs. Slopperton specified, and it was so short, that he could scarcely weary her patience by granting her request.

At this moment, the river, which was easily described from the windows of the room, glimmered in the star-light, and directing his looks towards the water, as if the scene had suggested to him the verses he sang, he gave the following stanzas in a very low, sweet tone, and with a far purer taste

than, perhaps, would have suited the proceeding and ruder song.

THE WISH.

"As sleeps the dreaming Eve below,
Its holiest star keeps ward above,
And yonder wave begins to glow,
Like Friendship bright'ning into Love!

Ah! would thy bosom were that stream,
Nearer wold save by the virgin air!—
Ah! would that I were that star, whose beam
Looks down and finds its image there!"

Scarcely was the song ended, before the arrival of Miss Brandon's servant was announced, and her destined escort starting up, gallantly assisted her with her cloak and her hood—happy, no doubt, to escape, in some measure, the overwhelming compliments of his entertainers.

"But," said the doctor, as he shook hands with his deliverer, "by what name shall I remember and"—(lifting his reverend eyes)—"pray for the gentleman to whom I am so much indebted!"

"You are very kind," said the stranger; "my name is Clifford, Madam" (turning to Lucy), "may I offer my hand down the stairs?"

Lucy accepted the courtesy, and the stranger was half way down the staircase, when the doctor, stretching out his little neck, exclaimed,—

"Good evening, sir! I do hope we shall meet again."

"Fear not," said Mr. Clifford, laughing gaily, "I am too great a traveller to make that hope a matter of impossibility. Take care, madam—one step more."

The night was calm and tolerably clear, though the moon had not yet risen, as Lucy and her companion passed through the fields, with the servant preceding them at a little distance with the lantern.

After a pause of some length, Clifford said, with a little hesitation, "Is

Miss Brandon related to the celebrated barrister of her name?"

"He is my uncle," said Lucy; "do you know him?"

"Only your uncle?" said Clifford, with vivacity, and evading Lucy's question. "I feared—hem! hem!—that is, I thought he might have been a nearer relation." There was another, but a shorter pause, when Clifford resumed, in a low voice, "Will Miss Brandon think me very presumptuous if I say, that a countenance like hers, once seen, can never be forgotten; and I believe, some years since, I had the honour to see her in London, at the theatre? It was but a momentary and distant glance that I was then enabled to gain; and yet," he added, significantly, "it sufficed!"

"I was only once at the theatre while in London, some years ago," said Lucy, a little embarrassed; "and, indeed, an unpleasant occurrence which happened to my uncle, with whom I was, is sufficient to make me remember it."

"Ha!—and what was it?"

"Why, in going out of the play-house, his watch was stolen by some dexterous pickpocket."

"Was the rogue caught?" asked the stranger.

"Yes; and was sent the next day to Bridewell. My uncle said he was extremely young, and yet quite hardened. I remember that I was foolish enough, when I heard of his sentence to beg very hard that my uncle would intercede for him; but in vain."

"Did you, indeed, intercede for him?" said the stranger, in so earnest a tone that Lucy coloured for the twentieth time that night, without seeing any necessity for the blush. Clifford continued in a gayer tone, "Well, it is surprising how rogues hang together. I should not be greatly surprised if the person who despoiled your uncle were one of the same gang

as the rascal who so terrified your worthy friend the doctor. But is this handsome old place your home?"

"This is my home," answered Lucy; "but it is an old-fashioned, strange place; and few people, to whom it was not endeared by associations, would think it handsome."

"Pardon me!" said Lucy's companion, stopping, and surveying, with a look of great interest, the quaint pile, which now stood close before them; its dark bricks, gable-ends, and ivied walls, tinged by the starry light of the moon, and contrasted by the river, which roiled in silence below. The shutters to the large oriel window of the room, in which the squire usually sat, were still unclosed, and the steady and warm light of the apartment shone forth, casting a glow, even to the smooth waters of the river: at the same moment, too, the friendly bark of the house-dog was heard, as in welcome; and was followed by the note of the great bell, announcing the hour for the last meal of the old-fashioned and hospitable family.

"There is a pleasure in this!" said the stranger, unconsciously, and with a half-sigh: "I wish I had a home!"

"And have you not a home?" said Lucy, with naïveté.

"As much as a bachelor can have, perhaps," answered Clifford, recovering without an effort his gaiety and self-possession. "But you know we wanderers are not allowed the same boast as the more fortunate Benedicts; we send our hearts in search of a home, and we lose the one without gaining the other. But I keep you in the cold, and we are now at your door."

"You will come in, of course!" said Miss Brandon, "and partake of our evening cheer."

The stranger hesitated for an instant, and then said in a quick tone, —

"No! many, many thanks; it is already late. Will Miss Brandon accept my gratitude for her condescension, in permitting the attendance of one unknown to her?" As he thus spoke, Clifford bowed profoundly over the hand of his beautiful charge; and Lucy, wishing him good-night, hastened, with a light step, to her father's side.

Meanwhile, Clifford, after lingering a minute, when the door was closed on him, turned abruptly away; and, muttering to himself, repaired with rapid steps to whatever object he had then in view.

CHAPTER XII.

"Up mose yo then
My merry, merry men!"—JOANNA BAILLIE.

WHEN the moon rose that night, there was one spot upon which she palely broke, about ten miles distant from Warlock, which the forewarned traveller would not have been eager to pass, but which might not have afforded a bad study to such artists as have sought from the savage painter of the Apennines a love for the wild

and the adventurous. Dark trees, scattered far and wide over a broken, but verdant sward, made the background, the moon shone through the boughs as she came slowly forth from her pavilion of cloud, and poured a broader beam on two figures just advanced beyond the trees. More plainly brought into light by her rays

than his companion, here a horseman, clad in a short cloak that barely covered the crupper of his steed, was looking to the priming of a large pistol which he had just taken from his holster. A slouched hat, and a mask of black crape, conspired with the action to throw a natural suspicion on the intentions of the rider. His horse, a beautiful dark grey, stood quite motionless, with arched neck, and its short ears quickly moving to and fro, demonstrative of that sagacious and anticipative attention which characterises the noblest of all tamed animals: you would not have perceived the impatience of the steed, but for the white foam that gathered round the bit, and for an occasional and unfrequent toss of the head. Behind this horseman, and partially thrown into the dark shadow of the trees, another man, similarly clad, was busied in tightening the girths of a horse, of great strength and size. As he did so, he hummed, with no unmusical murmur, the air of a popular drinking song.

"Sdeath, Ned!" said his comrade, who had for some time been plunged in a silent reverie,—"Sdeath! why can you not stifle your love for the fine arts, at a moment like this! That hum of thine grows louder every moment, at last I expect it will burst out into a full roar; recollect we are not at Gentleman George's now!"

"The more's the pity, Augustus," answered Ned. "Soho, Little John; wouho, sir! a nice long night like this is made on purpose for drinking. Will you, sir? keep still then!"

"Man never is, but always to be blest," said the moralising Tomlinson; "you see you sigh for other scenes even when you have a fine night and the chance of a God-send before you."

"Ay, the night is fine enough," said Ned, who was rather a grumbler, as, having finished his groom-like

operation, he now slowly mounted. "D—— it, Oliver" looks out as broadly as if he were going to blab. For my part, I love a *dark* night, with a star here and there winking at us, as much as to say, 'I see you, my boys, but I won't say a word about it,' and a small, pattering, drizzling, muzzling rain, that prevents Little John's hoofs being heard, and covers one's retreat, as it were. Besides, when one is a little wet, it is always necessary to drink the more, to keep the cold from one's stomach when one gets home."

"Or in other words," said Augustus, who loved a maxim from his very heart, "light wet cherishes heavy wet!"

"Good!" said Ned, yawning. "Hang it, I wish the captain would come. Do you know what o'clock it is!—Not far short of eleven, I suppose!"

"About that!—hist, is that a carriage?—no—it is only a sudden rise in the wind."

"Very self-sufficient in Mr. Wind to allow himself to be raised without our help!" said Ned: "by the way, we are of course to go back to the Red Cave."

"So Captain Lovett says—Tell me, Ned, what do you think of the new tenant Lovett has put into the cave?"

"Oh, I have strange doubts there," answered Ned, shaking the hairy honours of his head. "I don't half like it; consider, the cave is our stronghold, and ought only to be known —"

"To men of tried virtue," interrupted Tomlinson. "I agree with you; I must try and get Lovett to discard his singular *protégé*, as the French say."

"Gad, Augustus, how came you by so much learning! You know all

the poets by heart, to say nothing of Latin and French."

"Oh, hang it, I was brought up, like the captain, to a literary way of life."

"That's what makes you so thick with him, I suppose. He writes and sings too, a tolerable song, and is certainly a duced clever fellow. What a rise in the world he has made! Do you recollect what a poor sort of way he was in when you introduced him at Gentleman George's and now he's the Captain Crank of the gang?"

"The gang! the company you mean. Gang, indeed! One would think you were speaking of a knot of pickpockets. Yes Lovett is a clever fellow, and, thanks to me, a very decent philosopher!" It is impossible to convey to our reader the grave air of importance with which Tomlinson made his concluding laudation.

"Yes," said he, after a pause, "he has a bold, plain way of viewing things, and, like Voltaire, he becomes a philosopher by being a Man of Sense! Hush! see my horse's ears! some one is coming, though I don't hear him! Keep watch!"

The soldiers grew silent, the sound of distant hoofs was indistinctly heard, and, as it came nearer, there was a crash of boughs, as if a hedge had been ridden through; presently the figure of a horseman, approaching through the copse in the rear of the robbers. Now he was half seen among the simooms of his forest path, now in full sight, now almost hid; then his horse neighed impatiently; now he again came in sight, and in a moment more he had joined the pair. The new comers was of a tall and sinewy frame, and in the first bloom of manhood. A frock of dark green, edged with a narrow silver lace, and buttoned from the throat to the middle, gave due effect to an upright mien, a broad

chest, and a slender, but rounded waist, that stood in no need of the compression of the tailor. A short riding cloak clasped across the throat with a silver buckle, hung picturesque over one shoulder, while his lower limbs were cased in military boots, which, though they rose above the knee, were evidently neither heavy nor embarrassing to the vigorous sinews of the horseman. The equipments of the steed—the bit, the bridle, the saddle—the holster—were according to the most approved fashion of the day; and the steed itself was in the highest condition, and of remarkable beauty. The horseman's air was erect and bold; a small but coal black mustache heightened the resolute expression of his short, curved lip; and from beneath the large hat which overhung his brow, his long locks escaped, and waved darkly in the keen night air. Altogether, horseman and horse exhibited a gallant and even a chivalrous appearance, which the hour and the scene heightened to a dramatic and romantic effect.

"Ha! Lovett."

"How are you, my merry men?" were the salutations exchanged.

"What news?" said Ned.

"Brave news! look to it. My lord and his carriage will be by in ten minutes at most."

"Have you got anything more out of the puzen I frightened so gloriously?" asked Augustus.

"No; more of that hereafter. Now for our new prey!"

"Are you sure our noble friend will be so soon at hand?" said Tomlinson, patting his steed, that now pawed in excited hilarity.

"Sure! I saw him change horses; I was in the stable yard at the time; he got out for half an hour, to eat, I fancy. Be sure that I played him a trick in the meanwhile."

"What force?" asked Ned.

"Self and servant."

"The post boy?"

"Ay, I forgot them. Never mind, you must frighten them."

"Forwards!" cried Ned, and his horse sprang from his armed heel.

"Our moment," said Lovett; "I must put on my mask—*who*—Robin, *who*! Now for it—*forwards*!"

As the trees rapidly disappeared behind them, the riders entered, at a hand gallop, on a broad track of waste land interspersed with dykes and occasionally fences of hurdles, over which their horses bounded like quadrupeds well accustomed to such exploits.

Certainly at that moment, what with the fresh air, the fitful moonlight now breaking broadly out, now lost in a rolling cloud, the exciting exercise, and that racy and dancing stir of the blood, which all action, whether evil or noble in its nature, raises in our veins; what with all this, we cannot but allow the fascination of that lawless life:—a fascination so great, that one of the most noted gentlemen highwaymen of the day, one too who had received an excellent education, and mixed in no inferior society, is reported to have said when the rope was about his neck, and the good Ordinary was exhorting him to repent of his ill-spent life, "*Ill-spent, you dog!—Gad! (smacking his lips) it was delicious!*"

"Fie! fie! Mr. —, raise your thoughts to Heaven!"

"But a canter across a common—*oh!*" muttered the criminal; and his soul cantered off to eternity.

So briskly leaped the heart of the leader of the three, that, as they now came in view of the main road, and the distant wheel of a carriage whirled on the ear, he threw up his right hand with a joyous gesture, and burst into a boyish exclamation of hilarity and delight.

"Whist, captain!" said Ned, check-

ing his own spirits with a mock air of gravity, "let us conduct ourselves like gentlemen; it is only your low fellows who get into such confoundedly high spirits; men of the world like us should do everything as if their hearts were broken."

"Melancholy* ever cronies with

* A maxim which would have pleased Madame de Staël, who thought that pessimism consisted in fine sentiments. In the *Life of Lord Byron*, just published by Mr. Moore, the distinguished biographer makes a similar assertion to that of the sage Augustus: "When did ever a sublime thought spring up in the soul that Melancholy was not to be found, however latent, in its neighbourhood?" Now, with due deference to Mr. Moore, this is a very sickly piece of nonsense, that has not even an atom of truth to stand on. "God said, Let there be light, and there was light!"—We should like to know where lies the Melancholy of that sublime sentence? "Truth," says Plato, "is the body of God, and Light is his shadow." In the name of common sense, in what possible corner, in the vicinity of that lofty image, lurks the jaundiced face of this eternal *l'été noir* of Mr. Moore's? Again, in that sublimest passage in the sublimest of the Latin poets (Lucretius), which bursts forth in honour of Epicurus, is there any thing that speaks to us of sadness? On the contrary. In the three passages we have referred to, especially in the two first quoted, there is something splendidly luminous and cheering. Joy is often a great source of the sublime; the suddenness of its venturings would alone suffice to make it so. What can be more sublime than the triumphant Psalms of David, intoxicated as they are with an almost delirium of transport? Even in the *gloomiest* passages of the poets, where we recognise sublimity, we do not often find *melancholy*. We are stricken by terror, appalled by awe, but seldom *softened* into sadness. In fact, Melancholy rather belongs to another class of feelings than those excited by a sublime passage or those which engender its composition. On one hand, in the loftiest flights of Homer, Milton, and Shakespeare, we will challenge a critic to discover this "green sickness" which Mr. Moore would convert into the magnificence of the

* "*Primus Graius homo mortaleis tollere, contra.*" &c.

To these instances we might especially add the odes of Pindar, Horace, and Campbell.

"Sublimity, and Courage is sublime," said Augustus, with the pomp of a maxim maker.

"Now for the hedge!" cried Lovett, unheeding his comrades, and his horse sprang into the road.

The three men now were drawn up quite still, and motionless by the side of the hedge. The broad road lay before them, curving out of sight on

pages. On the other hand, where is the coherence that mechanically reads the habitual temperaments of these diving men? of Hamlet we know nothing; of Shakespeare and Milton we have reason to believe the ordinary temperament was constitutionally cheerful. The latter boasted it. A thousand instances, in contradiction to an assertion it were not worth while to contradict, were it not so generally persistent, so highly estimated, and so ornamentally personated, in constituting that is nature and nature in literature, next to our memory. But we think we have already quoted enough to improve the sentence, which the illustrious biographer has himself depressed in more than twenty passages, while of his is pleased to forget, we think Heaven, posterity never will. Now we are on the verge of this life, so excellent in many respects, we cannot but observe, that we think the whole scope of the philosophy utterly unsoundly of the acknowledged trend of the matter; the philosophy consists of an unperceptive distorting of general truths, to suit the peculiarities of an individual, rather honest, but profoundly misanthropic and discontent. A striking instance of this occurs in the life and conversation of that poor madman that worthy domestic creature. What I have said Lord Byron is said to have been a bad husband, was it so or further back for example, was Walter Scott a bad husband? or was Catherine? or is Mr. Moore himself? Why in the name of justice should it be admitted that Milton was a bad husband, when such an act is our judge of the matter, it was Mrs. Milton, who was the bad wife? And who, oh! who should we be told by Mr. Moore, a man who to judge by the *Englishman* and the *Pigmerian*, seems neither lacking nor diligent, who are we to be told, with positive evidence, that Lord Byron was a bad husband, when Lord Byron had only married, but his marriage was as advantageous as to be an absolute gain to his estate? Hence, really, one begins to believe that there is not even a thing with fact in the world!

either side, the ground was hardening under an early tendency to frost, and the clear ring of approaching hoofs sounded on the ear of the robbers, ominous, haply, of the chinks of "more attractive metal" about, if Hope told no flattering tale, to be their own.

Presently the long-expected vehicle made its appearance at the turn of the road, and it rolled rapidly on behind four fleet post-horses.

"You, Ned, with your large steed, stop the horses; you Augustus, bully the post-boys; leave me to do the rest," said the captain.

"As agreed," returned Ned, laconically. "Now, look at me!" and the horse of the vain highwayman sprang from its shelter. So instantaneous were the operations of these experienced tacticians, that Lovett's orders were almost executed in a briefer time than it had cost him to give them.

The carriage being stopped, and the post-boys white and trembling, with two pistols levelled by Augustus and Peppers cocked at their heads, Lovett dismounting, threw open the door of the carriage, and in a very civil tone, and with a very bland address, accosted the inmate.

"Do not be alarmed, my lord, you are perfectly safe; we only require your watch and purse."

"Really," answered a voice still softer than that of the robber, while a marked and somewhat *French* countenance, crowned with a fur cap, peered forth at the arrester,—"really, sir, your request is so modest that I were worse than cruel to refuse you. My purse is not very full, and you may as well have it as one of my rascally duns; but my watch I have a love for, and —"

"I understand you, my lord," interrupted the highwayman. "What do you value your watch at?"

"Humph—to you it may be worth some twenty guineas."

"Allow me to see it!"

"Your curiosity is extremely gratifying," returned the nobleman, as with great reluctance he drew forth a gold repeater, set, as was sometimes the fashion of that day, in precious stones. The highwayman looked slightly at the bangle.

"Your lordship," said he, with great gravity, "was too modest in your calculation—your taste reflects greater credit on you; allow me to assure you that your watch is worth fifty guineas to us at the least. To show you that I think so most sincerely, I will either keep it, and we will say no more on the matter; or I will return it to you upon your word of honour that you will give me a cheque for fifty guineas payable, by your *bank* bankers, to 'bearer for self.' Take your choice; it is quite immaterial to me!"

"Upon my honour, sir," said the traveller, with some surprise struggling to his features, "your coolness and self-possession are quite admirable. I see you know the word."

"Your lordship flatters me!" returned Lovett, bowing. "How do you decide?"

"Why, is it possible to write drafts without ink, pen, or paper?"

Lovett drew back, and while he was searching in his pockets for writing implements, which he always carried about him, the traveller seized the opportunity, and, suddenly snatching a pistol from the pocket of the carriage, levelled it full at the head of the robber. The traveller was an excellent and practised shot—he was almost within arm's length of his intended victim—his pistols were the envy of all his Irish friends. He pulled the trigger—the powder flashed in the pan, and the highwayman, not even changing countenance, drew forth a small ink-bottle, and placing a steel pen in it, handed it to the nobleman, saying, with incomparable *sang froid*, "Would you like my lord, to try the

other pistol! If so, oblige me by a quick aim, as you must see the necessity of despatch. If not, here is the back of a letter, on which you can write the draft."

The traveller was not a man apt to become embarrassed in anything—save his circumstances; but he certainly felt a little discomposed and confused as he took the paper, and, uttering some broken words, wrote the cheque. The highwayman glanced over it, saw it was written according to form, and then with a bow of cool respect, returned the watch, and shut the door of the carriage.

Meanwhile the servant had been shivering in front—boxed up in that solitary convenience termed, not euphoniously, a dickey. Him the robber now briefly accosted.

"What have you got about you belonging to your master?"

"Only his pills, your honour! which I forgot to put in the —"

"Pills!—throw them down to me!" The valet tremblingly extracted from his side-pocket a little box, which he threw down, and Lovett caught in his hand.

He opened the box, counted the pills—

"One, — two, — four, — twelve, — Aha!" He reopened the carriage door.

"Are those your pills, my lord?"

The wondering peer, who had begun to resettle himself in the corner of his carriage, answered "that they were!"

"My lord, I see you are in a high state of fever; you were a little delirious just now when you snapped a pistol in your friend's face. Permit me to recommend you a prescription—swallow off all these pills!"

"My God!" cried the traveller, startled into earnestness: "What do you mean!—twelve of those pills would kill a man!"

"Hear him!" said the robber, appealing to his comrades, who roared

with long hair. "What, my lord, would you resist against your doctor!—Fie, fie!" he persuaded."

And with a soothing gesture he stretched the pill-box towards the recoiling nose of the traveller. But though a man who could as well as any one make the best of a bad condition, the traveller was especially careful of his health; and so obstinate was he where that was concerned, that he would rather have submitted to the effectual operation of a bullet, than incurred the chance operation of an extra pill. He, therefore, with great indignation, as the box was still extended towards him, snatched it from the hand of the robber, and, flinging it across the road, said, with dignity—

"Do your worst, rascals! But, if you leave me alive, you shall repent the outrage you have offered to one of his Majesty's household!" Then, as if becoming sensible of the ridicule of affecting too much in his present situation, he added in an altered tone: "And now, for Heaven's sake, shut the door; and if you must kill some body, there's my servant on the box—he's paid for it."

This speech made the robbers laugh more than ever; and Lovett, who liked a joke even better than a purse,

immediately closed the carriage door saying,—

"Adieu! my lord; and let me give you a piece of advice: whenever you get out at a country inn, and stay half-an-hour while your horses are changing, take your pistols with you, or you may chance to have the charge drawn."

With this admonition the robber withdrew; and seeing that the valet held out to him a long green purse, he said, gently shaking his head,—

"Rogues should not prey on each other, my good fellow. You rob your master—so do we—let each keep what he has got."

Long Ned and Tomlinson then backing their horses, the carriage was freed; and away started the post boys at a pace which seemed to shew less regard for life than the robbers themselves had evinced.

Meanwhile the captain remounted his steed, and the three confederates, bounding in gallant style over the hedge through which they had previously gained the road, galloped off in the same direction they had come; the moon ever and anon bringing into light their flying figures, and the sound of many a joyous peal of laughter ringing through the distance along the frosty air.

CHAPTER XIII.

"What is here?"

Gold?

Thus much of this will make black white—foul fair."

Timon of Athens.

"Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly drest,
Frosh as a bridegroom."

Henry the Fourth.

"I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius! He reads much.
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men
Often he smiles; but smiles in such a sort,
As if he mocked himself or scorned his spirit,
That could be moved to smile at anything."

Julius Caesar.

THE next day, late at noon, as Lucy was sitting with her father, not as usual engaged either in work or in reading, but seemingly quite idle, with her pretty foot upon the squire's gouty stool, and her eyes fixed on the carpet, while her hands (never were hands so soft and so small as Lucy's, though they may have been eclipsed in whiteness) were lightly clasped together and reposed listlessly on her knees,—the surgeon of the village abruptly entered with a face full of news and horror. Old Squire Brandon was one of those persons who always hear news, whatever it may be, later than any of their neighbours; and it was not till all the gossips of the neighbourhood had picked the bone of the matter quite bare, that he was now informed, through the medium of Mr. Pillum, that Lord Mauleverer had on the preceding night been stopped by three highwaymen in his road to his country seat, and robbed to a considerable amount.

The fame of the worthy Doctor Sloperton's mal-adventure having, long ere this, been spread far and wide, the whole neighbourhood was naturally thrown into great consternation. Magistrates were sent to,

large dogs borrowed, blunderbusses cleaned, and a subscription made throughout the parish for the raising of a patrol. There seemed little doubt but that the offenders, in either case, were members of the same horde; and Mr. Pillum, in his own mind, was perfectly convinced that they meant to encroach upon his trade, and destroy all the surrounding householders who were worth the trouble.

The next week passed in the most diligent endeavours, on the part of the neighbouring magistrates and yeomanry, to detect and seize the robbers, but their labours were utterly fruitless; and one justice of peace, who had been particularly active, was himself entirely "cleaned out" by an old gentleman, who, under the name of Mr. Bureshot—rather an ominous cognomen—offered to conduct the unsuspecting magistrate to the very spot where the miscreants might be seized. No sooner, however, had he drawn the poor justice away from his comrades into a lonely part of the road, than he stripped him to his shirt. He did not even leave his worship his flannel drawers, though the weather was as bitter as the dog days of eighteen hundred and twenty-nine.

" 'Tis not my way," said the hoary ruffian, when the justice petitioned at least for the latter article of attire: " 'Tis not my way—I be's slow about my work, but I does it thoroughly—so off with your rags old 'un."

This was, however, the only additional instance of aggression in the vicinity of Warlock Manor-house; and, by degrees, as the autumn declined, and no farther enormities were perpetrated, people began to look out for a new topic of conversation. This was afforded them by a piece of unexpected good fortune to Lucy Brandon.

Mrs. Warner, an old lady to whom she was slightly related, and with whom she had been residing during her brief and only visit to London, died suddenly, and in her will declared Lucy to be her sole heiress. The property, which was in the funds, and which amounted to sixty thousand pounds, was to be enjoyed by Miss Brandon immediately on her attaining her twenty-first year; meanwhile the executors to the will were to pay to the young heiress the annual sum of six hundred pounds. The joy which this news created in Warlock Manor-house may easily be conceived. The squire projected improvements here, and repairs there; and Lucy, poor girl, who had no idea of money for herself, beyond the purchase of a new pony or a gown from London, surrounded with affectionate piety all her father's suggestions, and delighted herself with the reflection that those fine plans, which were to make the Brandon's greater than the Brandons ever were before, were to be realized by her own own money. It was at this identical time that the surrounding gentry made a simultaneous and grand discovery—viz. of the astonishing merits and great good sense of Mr. Joseph Brandon. It was a pity, they observed, that he was of so reserved and shy a turn—it was not becoming in a gentleman of so

ancient a family. But why should they not endeavour to draw him from his retirement into those more public scenes which he was doubtless well calculated to adorn?

Accordingly, as soon as the first month of mourning had expired, several coaches, chariots, chaises, and horses, which had never been seen at Warlock Manor-house before, arrived there one after the other in the most friendly manner imaginable. Their owners admired every thing—the house was such a fine relic of old times!—for their parts they liked an oak-staircase!—and those nice old windows!—and what a beautiful peacock!—and, Heaven save the mark! that magnificent chestnut-tree was worth a forest!—Mr. Brandon was requested to make one of the county hunt, not that he any longer hunted himself, but that his name would give such consequence to the thing!—Miss Lucy must come to pass a week with her dear friends the Honourable Misses Sansterre!—Augustus, their brother, had *such* a sweet lady's horse!—In short, the customary change which takes place in people's characters after the acquisition of a fortune, took place in the characters of Mr. and Miss Brandon; and when people become suddenly amiable, it is no wonder that they should suddenly gain a vast accession of friends.

But Lucy, though she had seen so little of the world, was not quite blind; and the squire, though rather obtuse, was not quite a fool. If they were not rude to their new visitors, they were by no means overpowered with gratitude at their condescension. Mr. Brandon declined subscribing to the hunt, and Miss Lucy laughed in the face of the Honourable Augustus Sansterre. Among their new guests, however, was one who to great knowledge of the world joined an extreme and even brilliant polish of manners, which at least prevented desert from

being disagreeable, if not wholly from being unseen — this was the new lieutenant of the county, Lord Mauleverer.

Though possessed of an immense property in that district, Lord Mauleverer had hitherto resided but little on his estates. He was one of those gay lords who are now somewhat uncommon in this country after mature manhood is attained, who live an easy and rakish life, rather among their parasites than their equals, and who yet, by aid of an agreeable manner, natural talents, and a certain graceful and light cultivation of mind (not the less pleasant for its being universally coloured with worldliness, and an amusing rather than offensive regard for self), never lose their legitimate station in society; who are oracles in dress, equipages, cookery, and beauty, and, having no character of their own, are able to fix by a single word a character upon any one else. Thus, while Mauleverer rather lived the dissolute life of a young nobleman, who prefers the company of agreeable demireps to that of wearisome duchesses, than maintained the decorous state befitting a mature age, and an immense interest in the country,—he was quite as popular at court, where he held a situation in the household, as he was in the green-room, where he enchanted every actress on the right side of forty. A word from him in the legitimate quarters of power went farther than an harangue from another; and even the prudes,—at least, all those who had daughters,—confessed “that his lordship was a very interesting character.” Like Brandon, his familiar friend, he had risen in the world (from the Irish baron to the English earl) without having ever changed his politics, which were ultra-Tory; and we need not observe that he was deemed, like Brandon, a model of public integrity. He was possessed of two places under government, six

votes in the House of Commons, and eight livings in the church; and we must add, in justice to his loyal and religious principles, that there was not in the three kingdoms a firmer friend to the existing establishments.

Whenever a nobleman does not marry, people try to take away his character. Lord Mauleverer had never married; the Whigs had been very bitter on the subject; they even alluded to it in the House of Commons, that chaste assembly, where the never-failing subject of reproach against Mr. Pitt was the not being of an amorous temperament; but they had not hitherto prevailed against the stout earl's celibacy. It is true, that if he was devoid of a wife, he had secured to himself plenty of substitutes; his profession was that of a man of gallantry; and though he avoided the daughters, it was only to make love to the mothers. But his lordship had now attained a certain age, and it was at last circulated among his friends that he intended to look out for a Lady Mauleverer.

“Spare your caresses,” said his toady-in-chief to a certain duchess, who had three portionless daughters: “Mauleverer has sworn that he will not choose among your order: you know his high politics, and you will not wonder at his declaring himself averse in matrimony as in morals, to a community of goods.”

The announcement of the earl's matrimonial design, and the circulation of this anecdote, set all the clergymen's daughters in England on a blaze of expectation; and when Mauleverer came to * * * shire, upon obtaining the honour of the lieutenancy, to visit his estates and court the friendship of his neighbours, there was not an old young lady of forty, who worked in broad-stitch and had never been to London above a week at a time, who did not deem herself exactly the sort of person sure to fascinate his lordship.

It was late in the afternoon when the travelling chariot of this distinguished person, preceded by two outriders in the earl's address livery of dark green, stopped at the hall door of Warlock House. The squire was at home, actually and metaphorically, for he never dreamed of denying himself to any one, gentle or simple. The door of the carriage being opened, there descended a small slight man, neatly dressed for lace and silk vest, mounts were not then quite discarded, though gradually growing less the mode), and of an air prepossessing, and distinguished, rather than dignified. His years,—for his countenance, though handsome, was deeply marked and evidenced the tokens of occupation,—seemed more numerous than they really were, and, though not actually past middle age, Lord Mauleverer might fairly have reserved the unpromising aspect of elderly. However, his step was firm, his gait upright, and his figure was considerably more youthful than his physiognomy. The first compliments of the day having passed, and Lord Mauleverer having expressed his concern that his long and frequent absence from the county had hitherto prevented his making the acquaintance of Mr. Brandon, the brother of one of his oldest and most esteemed friends, conversation began on both sides rather an effort. Mr. Brandon first introduced the subject of the weather, and the squire—hesitant whether his lordship was not very fond—for his part he used to be, but lately the rain-storms had disabled him, he begged his lordship was not subject to that complaint of shooting!

Catching only the last words,—for, besides the great complexity of the squire's sentences, Mauleverer was slightly afflicted by the hereditary complaint of deafness,—the earl answered with a smile,—

“The complaint of shooting!—

Very good indeed, Mr. Brandon; it is seldom that I have heard so witty a phrase. No, I am not in the least troubled with that epidemic. It is a disorder very prevalent in this county.”

“My lord,” said the squire, rather puzzled—and then observing that Mauleverer did not continue, he thought it expedient to start another subject.

“I was exceedingly grieved to hear that your lordship, in travelling to Mauleverer Park (that is a very ugly road across the waste land; the roads in this county are in general pretty good—for my own part, when I was a magistrate I was very strict in that respect)—was robbed. You have not yet, I believe, detected—for my part, though I do not profess to be much of a politician, I do think that in affairs of robbery there is a great deal of remissness in the ministers)—the robbers?”

“Our friend is disaffected!” thought the lord lieutenant, imagining that the last opprobrious term was applied to the respectable personages specified in the parenthesis. Bowing with a polished smile to the squire, Mauleverer replied aloud, that he was extremely sorry that their conduct (meaning the ministers) did not meet with Mr. Brandon’s approbation.

“Well,” thought the squire, “that is playing the double with a vengeance!” “Meet with my approbation!” said he, warmly: “how could your lordship think me—for though I am none of your saints, I am, I hope, a good Christian; an excellent one judging from your words, your lordship must be!) so partial to crime!”

“I partial to crime!” returned Mauleverer, thinking he had alluded innocently on some outrageous democrat, yet smiling as softly as usual, “you judge me harshly, Mr. Brandon! you must do me more justice, and you can only do that by knowing me better.”

Whatever unlucky answer the squire might otherwise have made was cut off by the entrance of Lucy; and the earl, secretly delighted at the interruption, rose to render her his homage, and to remind her of the introduction he had formerly been so happy as to obtain to her through the friendship of Mr. William Brandon,—“a friend ship,” said the gallant nobleman, “to which I have often before been indebted, but which was never more agreeably exerted on my behalf.”

Upon this Lucy, who, though she had been so painfully bashful during her meeting with Mr. Clifford, felt no overpowering diffidence in the presence of so much greater a person, replied laughingly, and the earl rejoined by a second compliment. Conversation was now no longer an effort; and Mauleverer, the most consummate of epicures, whom even royalty trembled to ask without preparation, on being invited by the unconscious squire to partake of the family dinner, eagerly accepted the invitation. It was long since the knightly walls of Warlock had been honoured by the presence of a guest so courtly. The good squire heaped his plate with a profusion of boiled beef; and while the poor earl was contemplating in dismay the alps upon alps which he was expected to devour, the grey-headed butler, anxious to serve him with alacrity, whipped away the over-loaded plate, and presently returned it, yet more astoundingly surcharged with an additional world of a composition of stony colour and sordid aspect, which, after examining in mute attention for some moments, and carefully removing as well as he was able, to the extreme edge of his plate, the earl discovered to be suet pudding.

“You eat nothing, my lord,” cried the squire; “let me give you (this is more underdone)” holding between blade and fork in middle air a horrent

fragment of scarlet, shaking its gory locks,—“another slice.”

Swift at the word dropped upon Mauleverer's plate the happy finger and ruthless thumb of the grey-headed butler.

“Not a morsel more,” cried the earl, struggling with the murderous domestic. “My dear sir, excuse me; I assure you I have never ate such a dinner before—never!”

“Nay, now!” quoth the squire, expostulating, “you really—(and this shews so keen that your lordship should indulge your appetite, if you follow the physician's advice,) eat nothing!”

Again Mauleverer was at fault.

“The physicians are right, Mr. Brandon,” said he; “very right, and I am forced to live abstemiously; indeed I do not know whether, if I were to exceed at your hospitable table, and attack all that you would bestow upon me, I should ever recover it. You would have to seek a new lieutenant for your charming county, and on the tomb of the last Mauleverer the hypocritical and unrelated heir would inscribe, ‘Died of the visitation of Beef, John, Earl, &c.’”

Plain as the meaning of this speech might have seemed to others, the squire only laughed at the effeminate appetite of the speaker, and inclined to think him an excellent fellow for jesting so good-humouredly on his own physical infirmity. But Lucy had the tact of her sex, and, taking pity on the earl's calamitous situation, though she certainly never guessed at its extent, entered with so much grace and ease into the conversation which he sought to establish between them, that Mauleverer's gentleman, who had hitherto been pushed aside by the zeal of the grey-headed butler, found an opportunity, when the squire was laughing and the butler staring, to steal away the overburthened plate unsuspected and unseen.

In spite, however, of these evils of

board and lodgment, Mauleverer was exceedingly well pleased with his visit; nor did he terminate it till the shades of night had begun to close, and the distance from his own residence compared with experience to remind him that it was possible for a highway man's audacity to attack the equipage even of Lord Mauleverer. He then reluctantly re-entered his carriage, and, holding the postilion down as far as possible, wrapped himself in his overcoat, and divided his thoughts between Lucy Brandon and the kindness and gentleness with which he purposed to receive himself immediately at his own home. However, Fate, which would have most cherished hopes, ordained that on arriving at Mauleverer Park, the peer should be suddenly affected with a loss of appetite, a sickness to the stomach, a pain in the chest, and various other unpleasant symptoms of particular validity. Lord Mauleverer went straight to bed; he remained there for some days, and when he recovered his physicians ordered him to Bath. The Whig Methodist, who hated him, ascribed his illness to Providence; and his lordship was firmly of opinion that it should be ascribed to the beef and pudding. However this be, there was an end, for the present, to the hopes of young ladies of forty, and to the intended festivities at Mauleverer Park. "Good Heavens!" said the earl, as his carriage wheels turned from his gate, "what a loss to country husbandry may be occasioned by a piece of underdone beef, especially if it be boiled!"

About a fortnight had elapsed since Mauleverer's departure, and the Whig took home, when the agents returned from his brother the following epistle—

"MY DEAR JOSEPH,

"You know my numerous avocations, and amid the press of business which surrounds me, will, I am sure,

forgive me for being a very negligent and remiss correspondent. Nevertheless, I assure you, no one can more sincerely sympathise in that good fortune which has befallen my charming niece, and of which your last letter informed me, than I do. Pray give my best love to her, and tell her how complacently I look forward to the brilliant sensation she will create, when her beauty is enthroned upon that rank which, I am quite sure, it will one day or other command.

"You are not aware, perhaps, my dear Joseph, that I have for some time been in a very weak and declining state of health. The old nervous complaint in my face has of late attacked me grievously, and the anguish is sometimes so great that I am scarcely able to bear it. I believe the great demand which my profession makes upon a frame of body never strong, and now beginning prematurely to feel the infirmities of time, is the real cause of my maladies. At last, however, I must absolutely punish my pocket, and indulge my inclinations by a short respite from toil. The doctors—sworn friends, you know, to the lawyers—since they make common cause against mankind, have peremptorily ordered me to lie by, and to try a short course of air, exercise, social amusements, and the waters of Bath. Fortunately this is vacation time, and I can afford to lose a few weeks of emolument, in order, perhaps, to secure many years of life. I purpose, then, early next week, repairing to that melancholy reservoir of the gay where persons dance out of life and are fiddled across the Styx. In a word, I shall make one of the adventures after health, who seek the goddess at King Bladud's pump-room. Will you and dear Lucy join me there? I ask it of your friendship, and I am quite sure that neither of you will shrink almost at the proposal of relieving your invalid relation. At

the same time that I am recovering health, my pretty niece will be avenging Pluto, by consigning to his dominions many a better and younger hero in my stead. And it will be a double pleasure to me to see all the hearts, &c. — I break off, for what can I say on that subject which the little coquette does not anticipate? It is high time that Lucy should see the world; and though there are many at Bath, above all places, to whom the heiress will be an object of interested attentions, yet there are also many in that crowded city by no means undeserving her notice. What say you, dear Joseph?—But I know already; you will not refuse to keep company with me in my little holiday, and Lucy's eyes are already sparkling at the idea of new bonnets, Milsom Street, a thousand adorers, and the Pump-room.

"Ever, dear Joseph,

"Yours affectionately,

"WILLIAM BRANDON.

"P.S.—I find that my friend Lord Mauleverer is at Bath; I own that is an additional reason to take me thither; by a letter from him, received the other day, I see that he has paid you a visit, and he now raves about his host and the heiress. Ah, Miss Lucy, Miss Lucy! are you going to conquer him whom all London has, for years more than I care to tell (yet not many, for Mauleverer is still young), assailed in vain? Answer me!"

This letter created a considerable excitement in Warlock House. The old squire was extremely fond of his brother, and grieved to the heart to find that he spoke so discouragingly of his health. Nor did the squire for a moment hesitate at accepting the proposal to join his distinguished relative at Bath. Lucy also,—who had for her uncle, possibly from his pro-

fuse yet not indelicate flattery, a very great regard and interest, though she had seen but little of him,—urged the squire to lose no time in arranging matters for their departure, so as to precede the barrister, and prepare everything for his arrival. The father and daughter being thus agreed, there was little occasion for delay; an answer to the invalid's letter was sent by return of post, and on the fourth day from their receipt of the said epistle, the good old squire, his daughter, a country girl, by way of abigail—the grey-headed butler, and two or three live pets, of the size and habits most convenient for travelling, were on their way to a city which at that time was rayer, at least, if somewhat less splendid, than the metropolis.

On the second day of their arrival at Bath, Brandon (as in future, to avoid confusion, we shall call the younger brother, giving to the elder his patriarchal title of squire) joined them.

He was a man seemingly rather fond of parade, though at heart he disrelished and despised it. He came to their lodging, which had not been selected in the very best part of the town, in a carriage and six, but attended only by one favourite servant.

They found him in better looks and better spirits than they had anticipated. Few persons, when he liked it, could be more agreeable than William Brandon; but at times there mixed with his conversation a bitter sarcasm, probably a habit acquired in his profession, or an occasional tinge of morose and haughty sadness, possibly the consequence of his ill-health. Yet his disorder, which was somewhat approaching to that painful affliction the *tic douloureux*, though of its more rare in occurrence than those of that complaint ordinarily are, never seemed even for an instant to operate upon his mood, whatever that might be. That disease worked unseen; not a

muscle of his face appeared to quiver; the smile never vanished from his mouth, the blandness of his voice never grew faint as with pain, and, in the midst of intense torture, his resolute and stern mind conquered every external indication; nor could the most observant stranger have noted the moment when the fit attacked or released him. There was something inscrutable about the man. You felt that you took his character upon trust, and not on your own knowledge. The acquaintance of years would have left you equally dark as to his vices or his virtues. He varied often, yet in each variation he was equally undiscoverable. Was he performing a series of parts, or was it the ordinary changes of a man's true temperament that you beheld in him? Commonly smooth, quiet, attentive, flattering in social intercourse, he was known in the senate and courts of law for a cold asperity, and a caustic venom,—sarcasm rivalled even in those arenas of contention. It seemed as if the better feelings he checked in private life, he delighted to indulge in public. Yet, even there, he gave not way to momentary petulance or gushing passion; all seemed with him systematic sarcasm, or habitual sternness. He outraged no form of ceremonial, or of society. He stung, without appearing conscious of the sting, and his antagonist writhed not more beneath the torture of his satire, than the crushing contempt of his self-command. Cool, ready, armed and defended on all points, sound in knowledge, unflinching in observation, equally consummate in sophistry when needed by himself, and instantaneous in detecting sophistry in another, requiring no art, however painful,—begudging no labour, however weighty,—minute in detail, yet not the less comprehending the whole subject in a grasp; such was the legal and public character William Brandon had established,

and such was the fame he joined to the unsullied purity of his moral reputation. But to his friends he seemed only the agreeable, clever, lively, and, if we may use the phrase *innocently*, the *worldly* man,—never affecting a superior sanctity, or an over-anxiety to forms, except upon great occasions, and rendering his austerity of manners the more admired, because he made it seem so unaccompanied by hypocrisy.

"Well," said Brandon, as he sat after dinner alone with his relations, and had seen the eyes of his brother close in diurnal slumber.—"tell me, Miss Lucy, what you think of Lord Mauleverer; do you find him agreeable?"

"Very; too much so, indeed!"

"Too much so! that is an uncommon fault, Lucy; unless you mean to insinuate that you find him too agreeable for your peace of mind."

"Oh, no! there is little fear of that. All that I meant to express was, that he seems to make it the sole business of his life to be agreeable; and that one imagines he had gained that end by the loss of certain qualities which one would have liked better."

"Umph! and what are they?"

"Truth, sincerity, independence, and honesty of mind."

"My dear Lucy, it has been the professional study of my life to discover a man's character, especially as far as truth is concerned, in as short a time as possible; but you excel me by intuition, if you can tell whether there be sincerity in a courtier's character at the first interview you have with him."

"Nevertheless, I am sure of my opinion," said Lucy, laughing; "and I will tell you one instance I observed among a hundred. Lord Mauleverer is rather deaf, and he imagined, in conversation, that my father said one thing—it was upon a very trifling subject—the speech of some member

of parliament (the lawyer smiled), when in reality he meant to say an other. Lord Mauleverer, in the warmest manner in the world, chimed in with him, appeared thoroughly of his opinion, applauded his sentiments, and wished the whole country of his mind. Suddenly my father spoke, Lord Mauleverer bent down his ear, and found that the sentiments he had so lauded were exactly those my father the least favoured. No sooner did he make this discovery, than he wheeled round again, dexterously and gracefully, I allow; condemned all that he had before extolled, and extolled all that he had before abused!"

"And is that all, Lucy?" said Brandon, with a keener sneer on his lip than the occasion warranted. "Why, that is what every one does; only some more gravely than others. Mauleverer in society; I, at the bar; the minister in parliament; friend to friend; lover to mistress; mistress to lover; half of us are employed in saying white is black, and the other half in swearing that black is white. There is only one difference, my pretty niece, between the clever man and the fool; the fool says what is false while the colours stare in his face and give him the lie; but the clever man takes, as it were, a brush, and literally turns the black into white, and the white into black, before he makes the assertion, which is *then true*. The fool changes, and is a liar; the clever man makes the colours change, and is a genius. But this is not for your young years yet, Lucy."

"But, I can't see the necessity of seeming to agree with people," said Lucy, simply; "surely they would be just as well pleased if you differed from them civilly and with respect?"

"No, Lucy," said Brandon, still sneering; "to be liked, it is not necessary to be any thing but compliant; lie, cheat, make every word a snare, and every act a forgery—but

never contradict. Agree with people, and they make a couch for you in their hearts. You know the story of Dante and the buffoon. Both were entertained at the court of the vain potent, who called himself Prince Scaliger; the former poorly, the latter sumptuously. 'How comes it,' said the buffoon to the poet, 'that I am so rich and you so poor?' 'I shall be as rich as you,' was the stinging and true reply, 'whenever I can find a patron as like myself as Prince Scaliger is like you!'

"Yet my birds," said Lucy, caressing the goldfinch, which nestled to her bosom, "are not like me, and I love them. Nay, I often think I could love those better who differ from me the most. I feel it so in books;—when, for instance, I read a novel or a play; and you, uncle, I like almost in proportion to my perceiving in myself nothing in common with you."

"Yes," said Brandon, "you have in common with me a love for old stories of Sir Hugo, and Sir Rupert, and all the other 'Sirs' of our mouldered and by-gone race. So you shall sing me the ballad about Sir John de Brandon, and the dragon he slew in the Holy Land. We will adjourn to the drawing-room, not to disturb your father."

Lucy agreed, took her uncle's arm, repaired to the drawing-room, and, seating herself at the harpsichord, sang to an inspiring, yet somewhat rude air, the family ballad her uncle had demanded.

It would have been amusing to note in the rigid face of the hardened and habitual man of peace and parchments, a certain enthusiasm which ever and anon crossed his cheek, as the verses of the ballad rested on some allusion to the knightly House of Brandon, and its old renown. It was an early prejudice, breaking out despite of himself—a flash of character, stricken from the hard fossil in

which it was imbedded. One would have supposed that the silliest of all prizes for the prize of money, though money is less satisfactory, family pride, was the last weakness which at that time the selfish and avaricious lawyer would have possessed even to himself.

"Lucy," said Brandon, as the song ceased, and he gazed on his beautiful niece with a certain pride in his aspect,—"I long to witness your first appearance in the world. This to-day, my dear, is not fit—but pardon me! what I was about to say is this: your father and yourself are here at my invitation, and in my house you must dwell: you are my guests, not mine host and hostess. I have, therefore, already directed my servant to secure me a house, and provide the necessary establishment; and I make no doubt, as he is a quick fellow, that within three days all will be ready. You must then be the mistress of my abode, Lucy; and, meanwhile, you must explain this to my brother and for you know his jealous hospitality, obtain his assent."

"But——" began Lucy.

"But me no harm," said Brandon, quickly, but with an affectionate tone of softness. "And now as I feel very much fatigued with my journey, you must allow me to seek my own room."

"I will conduct you to it myself," said Lucy, for she was anxious to show her father's brother the care and forethought which she had bestowed on her arrangements for his comfort. Brandon followed her into an apartment, which his eye knew at a glance had been subjected to that female superintendence which makes such use from what men regard as trifling smart; and he thanked her with more than his usual courtesy, for the grace which had presided over, and the kindness which had dictated, her preparations. As soon as he was left alone, he wheeled his arm-chair near the clear, bright fire, and resting his

face upon his hand, in the attitude of a man who prepares himself, as it were, for the indulgence of meditation, he muttered:—

"Yes! these women are, first, what Nature makes them, and that is good: next, what we make them, and that is evil! Now, could I persuade myself that we ought to be nice as to the use we put these poor puppets to, I should shrink from enforcing the destiny which I have marked for this girl. But that is a pitiful consideration, and he is but a silly player who loses his money for the sake of preserving his counters. So the young lady must go as another score to the fortunes of William Brandon. After all, who suffers?—not she. She will have wealth, rank, honour: I shall suffer, to yield so pretty and pure a gem to the coronet of—laugh! How I despise that dog! but how I could hate, crush, mangle him, could I believe that he despised me! Could he do so? Umph! No, I have resolved myself, that is impossible. Well, let me hope that matrimonial point will be settled; and now, let me consider what next step I shall take for myself—myself!—ay—only myself!—with me perishes the last male of Brandon. But the light shall not go out under a bushel."

As he said this, the soliloquist sunk into a more absorbed, and a silent reverie, from which he was disturbed by the entrance of his servant. Brandon, who was never a dreamer, save when alone, broke at once from his reflections.

"You have obeyed my orders, Barlow!" said he.

"Yes, sir," answered the domestic. "I have taken the best house yet unoccupied, and when Mrs. Roberts (Brandon's housekeeper) arrives from London, every thing will, I trust, be exactly to your wish."

"Good! And you gave my note to Lord Mauleverer!"

"With my own hands, sir; his lordship will await you at home all to-morrow."

"Very well! and now, Barlow, see that your room is within call (bells, though known, were not common at that day), and give out that I am gone to bed, and must not be disturbed. What's the hour?"

"Just on the stroke of ten, sir."

"Place on that table my letter-case, and the inkstand. Look in, to help

me to undress, at half-past one; I shall go to bed at that hour. And—**stay**—be sure, Barlow, that my brother believes me retired for the night. He does not know my habits, and will vex himself if he thinks I sit up so late in my present state of health."

Drawing the table with its writing appurtenances near to his master, the servant left Brandon once more to his thoughts or his occupations.

CHAPTER XIV.

Servant. Get away, I say, wid dat nasty bell.

Punch. Do you call this a bell? (*quitting it*). It is an organ.

Servant. I say it is a bell—a nasty bell!

Punch. I say it is an organ (*striking him with it*).—What do you say it is now?

Servant. An organ, Mr. Punch!

The Tragical Comedy of Punch and Judy.

THE next morning, before Lucy and her father had left their apartments, Brandon, who was a remarkably early riser, had disturbed the luxurious Mauleverer in his first slumber. Although the courtier possessed a villa some miles from Bath, he preferred a lodging in the town, both as being warmer than a rarely inhabited country-house, and as being to an indolent man more immediately convenient for the gaieties and the waters of the medicinal city.

As soon as the earl had rubbed his eyes, stretched himself, and prepared himself for the untimely colloquy, Brandon poured forth his excuses for the hour he had chosen for a visit.

"Mention it not, my dear Brandon," said the good-natured nobleman, with a sigh; "I am glad at any hour to see you, and I am very sure that what you have to communicate is always worth listening to."

"It was only upon public business, though of rather a more important description than usual, that I ventured

to disturb you," answered Brandon, seating himself on a chair by the bedside. "This morning—an hour ago—I received by private express a letter from London, stating that a new arrangement will positively be made in the cabinet—nay, naming the very promotions and changes. I confess, that as my name occurred, as also your own, in these nominations, I was anxious to have the benefit of your necessarily accurate knowledge on the subject, as well as of your advice."

"Really, Brandon," said Mauleverer, with a half-peevish smile, "any other hour in the day would have done for 'the business of the nation,' as the newspapers call that troublesome farce we go through: and I had imagined you would not have broken my nightly slumbers, except for something of real importance—the discovery of a new beauty, or the invention of a new dish."

"Neither the one nor the other could you have expected from me, my

dear lord," rejoined Brandon. "You know the dry trifles in which a lawyer's life wastes itself away; and beauties and dukes have no attraction for us, except the former be damsels deserted, and the latter patents invaded. But my news, after all, is worth hearing, unless you have heard it before."

"Not I!" but I suppose I shall hear it in the course of the day: pray Heaven I be not sent for to attend some plague of a council. Begin."

"In the first place, Lord Duberly resolves to resign, unless this negotiation for peace be made a cabulet question."

"Bahaw!" let him resign. I have opposed the peace so long, that it is out of the question. Of course, Lord Wainston will not think of it, and he may mount on my boroughs. A peace! shameful, disgraceful, dastardly proposition!"

"But, my dear lord, my letter says, that this unexpected firmness on the part of Lord Duberly has produced so great a sensation, that, seeing the impossibility of forming a durable cabinet without him, the king has consented to the negotiation, and Duberly stays in."

"The devil!—what next?"

"Rafflen and Sternhold go out in favour of Baldwin and Charlton, and in the hope that you will lend your aid to —"

"I!" said Lord Mauleverer, very angrily. "I lend my aid to Baldwin, the Jacobin, and Charlton, the son of a brewer!"

"Very true!" continued Brandon. "But in the hope that you might be persuaded to regard the new arrangements with an indulgent eye, you are talked of instead of the Duke of — for the vacant garter and the office of chamberlain."

"You don't mean it!" cried Mauleverer, starting from his seat.

"A few other dots, I hear, chiefly legal propositions are to be made.

Among the rest, my learned brother, the democrat Sarsden, is to have a silk gown; Cromwell is to be attorney-general; and, between ourselves, they have offered me a judgeship."

"But the garter!" said Mauleverer, scarcely hearing the rest of the lawyer's news,—"the whole object, aim, and ambition of my life. How truly kind in the king! After all," continued the earl, laughing, and throwing himself back, "opinions are variable—truth is not uniform—the times change, not we—and we must have peace instead of war!"

"Your maxims are indisputable, and the conclusion you come to is excellent," said Brandon.

"Why, you and I, my dear fellow," said the earl, "who know men, and who have lived all our lives in the world, must laugh behind the scenes at the cant we wrap in tinsel, and send out to stalk across the stage. We know that our Cincinnatus of Tory integrity is a corporal kept by a prostitute; and the Brutus of Whig liberty is a lacquey turned out of place for stealing the spoons; but we must not tell this to the world. So, Brandon, you must write me a speech for the next session, and be sure it has plenty of general maxims, and concludes with 'my bleeding country!'"

The lawyer smiled. "You consent then to the expulsion of Sternhold and Rafflen! for, after all, that is the question. Our British vessel, as the old metaphor mongers call the state, carries the public good safe in the hold like brandy; and it is only when fear, storm, or the devil makes the rigorous quarrel among themselves, and break up the casks, that one gets above a dreadful at a time. We should go on fighting with the rest of the world for ever, if the ministers had not taken to fight among themselves."

"As for Sternhold," said the earl, "tis a vulgar dog, and voted for

economical reform. Besides, I don't know him; he may go to the devil for aught I care: but Raffden must be dealt handsomely with, or, despite the garter, I will fall back among the Whigs, who, after all, give tolerable dinners."

"But why, my lord, must Raffden be treated better than his brother recusant?"

"Because he sent me, in the handsomest manner possible, a pipe of that wonderful Madeira, which you know I consider the chief grace of my cellars, and he gave up a canal navigation bill, which would have enriched his whole county, when he knew that it would injure my property. No, Brandon, curse public cant; we know what that is. But we are gentlemen, and our private friends must not be thrown overboard,—unless, at least, we do it in the civillest manner we can."

"Fear not," said the lawyer; "you have only to say the word, and the cabinet can cook up an embassy to Owhyhee, and send Raffden there with a stipend of five thousand a-year."

"Ah! that's well thought of; or we might give him a grant of a hundred thousand acres in one of the colonies, or let him buy crown-land at a discount of eighty per cent. So that's settled."

"And now, my dear friend," said Brandon, "I will tell you frankly why I come so early; I am required to give a hasty answer to the proposal I have received, namely, of the judgeship. Your opinion?"

"A judgeship! you a judge! What! forsake your brilliant career for so petty a dignity!—you jest!"

"Not at all,—listen. You know how bitterly I have opposed this peace, and what hot enemies I have made among the new friends of the administration: on the one hand, these enemies insist on sacrificing me; and on the other, if I were to stay in the Lower House and speak for what I

have before opposed, I should forfeit the support of a great portion of my own party: hated by one body, and mistrusted by the other, a seat in the House of Commons ceases to be an object. It is proposed that I should retire on the dignity of a judge, with the positive and pledged, though secret, promise of the first vacancy among the chiefs. The place of chief justice or chief baron is indeed the only fair remuneration for my surrender of the gains of my profession, and the abandonment of my parliamentary and legal career; the title, which will of course be attached to it, might go (at least, by an exertion of interest,) to the eldest son of my niece, in case she married a commoner:—or," added he, after a pause, "her second son in case she married a peer."

"Ha—true!" said Mauleverer quickly, and as if struck by some sudden thought; "and your charming niece, Brandon, would be worthy of any honour either to her children or herself. You do not know how struck I was with her; there is something so graceful in her simplicity; and in her manner of smoothing down the little rugosities of Warlock House, there was so genuine and so easy a dignity, that I declare I almost thought myself young again, and capable of the self-cheat of believing myself in love. But, oh! Brandon, imagine me at your brother's board!—me, for whom ortolans are too substantial, and who feel, when I tread, the slightest inequality in the carpets of Tournay!—imagine me, dear Brandon, in a black wainscot room, hung round with your ancestors in brown wigs with posies in their button-holes,—an immense fire on one side, and a thorough draught on the other,—a huge circle of beef before me, smoking like Vesuvius, and twice as large,—a plateful (the plate was pewter—is there not a metal so called?) of this mingled

same and lava sent under my very nostrils, and upon pain of ill-breeding to be despatched down my proper mouth,—as old gentlemen in fastidious times and warmed stockings, by way of a heater, doing me a cut of ale,—and your worthy brother asking me if I would not prefer port,—a lean footman in livery (such a livery, ye gods! I swear, blue, yellow, and green, a rainbow of tints) on the opposite side of the table looking at the ‘Lord’ with eyes and mouth equally open, and large enough to swallow me,—and your excellent brother himself at the head of the table glowing through the mists of the beef like the rising sun in a ship’s port!—and then, Brandon, turning from this image, behold beside me the fair, delicate, aristocratic, yet simple loveliness of your niece, and—but you look angry—I have offended you.”

It was high time for Mauleverer to ask that question; for, during the whole of the earl’s rant, the dark face of his companion had literally burnt with rage; and here we may observe how generally selfishness, which makes the man of the world, prevents its possessor, by a sort of paradox, from being *conscientious*. For Mauleverer, occupied by the pleasure he felt at his own wit, and never having that magic sympathy with others, which creates the honest sunny-kenn observer, had not, for a moment thought that he was offending to the quick the hidden pride of the lawyer. Nay, so little did he suspect Brandon’s real weaknesses, that he thought him a philosopher, who would have laughed alike at principles and people, however near to him might be the latter, and however important the former. Mastering by a single effort, which restored his cheek to its usual steady hue, the outward signs of his displeasure, Brandon resumed:

“Offend me! by no means, my

dear lord. I do not wonder at your painful situation in an old country gentleman’s house, which has not for centuries offered scenes fit for the presence of so distinguished a guest. Never, I may say, since the time when Sir Charles de Brandon entertained Elizabeth at Warlock; and your ancestor (you know my old musty studies on those points of obscure antiquity), John Mauleverer, who was a noted goldsmith of London, supplied the plate for the occasion.”

“Fairly retorted,” said Mauleverer, smiling; for though the earl had a great contempt for low birth, set on high places, in other men, he was utterly void of pride in his own family. “Fairly retorted! but I never meant anything else but a laugh at your brother’s housekeeping; a joke, surely, permitted to a man whose own fastidiousness on these matters is so standing a jest. But, by heavens Brandon! to turn from these subjects, your niece is the prettiest girl I have seen for twenty years; and if she would forget my being the descendant of John Mauleverer, the noted goldsmith of London, she may be Lady Mauleverer as soon as she pleases.”

“Nay, now, let us be serious, and talk of the judgeship,” said Brandon, affecting to treat the proposal as a joke.

“By the soul of Sir Charles de Brandon, I am serious!” cried the earl, “and as a proof of it, I hope you will let me pay my respects to your niece to-day—not with my offer in my hand, yet—for it must be a love-match on *both* sides.” And the Earl, glancing towards an opposite glass, which reflected his attenuated but comely features, beneath his velvet nightcap, trimmed with *Mohair*, laughed half triumphantly as he spoke.

A sneer just passed the lips of Brandon, and as instantly vanished; while Mauleverer continued—

“And as for the judgeship, dear Brandon, I advise you to accept it

though you know best ; and I do think no man will stand a fairer chance of the chief justiceship : or, though it be somewhat unusual for 'common' lawyers, why not the woolsack itself ? As you say, the second son of your niece might inherit the dignity of the peerage ! ”

“ Well, I will consider of it favourably,” said Brandon, and soon afterwards he left the nobleman to renew his broken repose.

“ I can't laugh at that man,” said Mauleverer to himself, as he turned round in his bed, “ though he has much that I should laugh at in another ; and faith, there is one little matter I might well scorn him for, if I were not a philosopher. 'Tis a pretty girl, his niece, and with proper instructions might do one credit ; besides she has 60,000*l.* ready money ; and, faith, I have not a shilling for my own pleasure, though I have, or, alas ! had, fifty thousand a-year for that of my establishment ! In all probability, she will be the lawyer's heiress, and he must have made, at least, as much again as her portion ; nor is *he*, poor devil, a very good life. Moreover, if he rise to the peerage ! and the second son—Well ! well ! it will not be such a bad match for the goldsmith's descendant either ! ”

With that thought, Lord Mauleverer fell asleep. He rose about noon, dressed himself with unusual pains,

and was just going forth on a visit to Miss Brandon, when he suddenly remembered that her uncle had not mentioned her address or his own. He referred to the lawyer's note of the preceding evening ; no direction was inscribed on it ; and Mauleverer was forced, with much chagrin, to forego for that day the pleasure he had promised himself.

In truth, the wary lawyer, who, as we have said, despised show and outward appearances as much as any man, was yet sensible of their effect even in the eyes of a lover ; and moreover, Lord Mauleverer was one whose habits of life were calculated to arouse a certain degree of vigilance on points of household pomp, even in the most unobservant. Brandon therefore resolved that Lucy should not be visited by her admirer, till the removal to their new abode was effected ; nor was it till the third day from that on which Mauleverer had held with Brandon the interview we have recorded, that the earl received a note from Brandon, seemingly turning only on political matters, but inscribed with the address and direction in full form.

Mauleverer answered it in person. He found Lucy at home, and more beautiful than ever ; and from that day his mind was made up, as the *mammas* say, and his visits became constant.

CHAPTER XV.

"There is a festival where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear.

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"Tis he—how came he thence?—what doth he here?"—*Lara.*

There are two charming situations in life for a woman: one, the first freshness of heiress-ship and beauty; the other, youthful widowhood with a large fortune. It was at least Lucy's fortune to enjoy the first. No sooner was she fairly launched into the gay world, than she became the object of universal idolatry. Crowds followed her wherever she moved: nothing was talked of, or dreamed of, toasted, or betted on, but Lucy Brandon; even her simplicity, and utter ignorance of the arts of fine life, enhanced the *façade* of her reputation. Somehow or other, young people of the gentler sex are rarely ill-bred, even in their counterfeits; and there is often a great deal of grace in inexperience. Her uncle, who accompanied her everywhere, himself no slight magnet of attraction, viewed her success with a complacent triumph which he suffered no one but her father or herself to detect. To the smooth coolness of his manner, nothing would have seemed more foreign than pride at the notice gained by a beauty, or exultation at any favour won from the caprices of fashion. As for the good old squire, one would have imagined him far more the invalid than his brother. He was scarcely ever seen, for though he went everywhere, he was one of those persons who sink into a corner the moment they enter a room. Whoever discovered him in his retreat, held out their hands, and exclaimed, "God bless me!—you

here! we have not seen you for this age!" Now and then, if in a very dark niche of the room a card table had been placed, the worthy gentleman toiled through an obscure rubber, but more frequently he sat with his hands clasped, and his mouth open, counting the number of candles in the room, or calculating "when that stupid music would be over."

Lord Mauleverer, though a polished and courteous man, whose great object was necessarily to ingratiate himself with the father of his intended bride, had a horror of being bored, which surpassed all other feelings in his mind. He could not, therefore, persuade himself to submit to the melancholy duty of listening to the squire's "linked speeches long drawn out." He always glided by the honest man's station, seemingly in an exceeding hurry, with a "Ah, my dear sir, how do you do? How delighted I am to see you!—And your incomparable daughter!—Oh, there she is!—pardon me, dear sir—you see my attraction!"

Lucy, indeed, who never forgot any one (except herself occasionally), sought her father's retreat as often as she was able; but her engagements were so incessant, that she no sooner lost one partner, than she was claimed and carried off by another. However, the squire bore his solitude with tolerable cheerfulness, and always declared that "he was very well amused, although balls and concerts

were necessarily a little dull to one who came from a fine old place like Warlock Manor-house, and it was not the same thing that pleased young ladies for, to them, that fiddling and giggling till two o'clock in the morning might be a *very pretty way of killing time, and their paper!*"

What considerably added to Lucy's celebrity, was the marked notice and admiration of a man so high in rank and *ton* as Lord Mansleverer. That personage, who still retained much of a youthful mind and temper, and who was in his nature more careless than haughty, preserved little or no state in his intercourse with the social revellers at Bath. He cared not whither he went, so that he was in the train of the young beauty: and the most fastidious nobleman of the English court was seen in every second and third rate set of a great watering-place, the attendant, the flirt, and often the ridicule of the daughter of an obscure and almost insignificant country squire. Despite the honour of so distinguished a lover, and despite all the novelties of her situation the pretty head of Lucy Brandon, was as yet, however, perfectly unturned; and as for her heart, the only impression that it had ever received, was made by that wandering guest of the village rector, whom she had never again seen, but who yet clung to her imagination, invested not only with all the graces which in right of a singularly handsome person he possessed,—but with those to which he never could advance a claim,—more dangerous to her peace, from the very circumstance of their origin in her fancy, not his merits.

They had now been some little time at Bath, and Brandon's brief respite was pretty nearly expired, when a public ball of uncommon and manifold attraction was announced. It was to be graced not only by the presence of all the surrounding families,

but also by that of royalty itself; it being an acknowledged fact, that people dance much better, and eat much more supper, when any relation to a king is present.

"I must stay for this ball, Lucy," said Brandon, who, after spending the day with Lord Mansleverer, returned home in a mood more than usually cheerful: "I must stay for this one ball, Lucy, and witness your complete triumph, even though it will be necessary to leave you the very next morning."

"So soon!" cried Lucy.

"So soon!" echoed the uncle with a smile, "How good you are to speak thus to an old valetudinarian, whose company must have fatigued you to death! nay, no pretty denials! But the great object of my visit to this place is accomplished: I have seen you, I have witnessed your *début* in the great world, with, I may say, more than a father's exultation, and I go back to my dry pursuits with the satisfaction of thinking our old and withered genealogical tree has put forth one blossom worthy of its freshest day."

"Uncle!" said Lucy, reprovingly, and holding up her taper finger with an arch smile, mingling with a blush, in which the woman's vanity spoke, unknown to herself.

"And why that look, Lucy!" said Brandon.

"Because—because—well, no matter! you have been bred to that trade in which, as you say yourself, men tell untruths for others, till they lose all truth for themselves. But, let us talk of you, not me; are you really well enough to leave us?"

Simple and even cool as the words of Lucy's question, when written, appear; in her mouth they took so tender, so anxious a tone, that Brandon, who had no friend, nor wife, nor child, nor any one in his household, in whom interest in his health or

and fate was a thing of course, and who was consequently wholly unaccountable to the agent of his doom, but himself of a solemn, thoughtful, and serene.

"Weg, weg, weg, Lucy," said he, in a low, earnest, earnest tone, that in which he usually spoke. "I should like still to profit by your name, and tempt my infirmities and pains in your society; but I cannot. The tide of events, like that of nature, waits not our pleasure."

"But we may take our own time for setting sail," said Lucy.

"Ay, but comes of talking in metaphor," rejoined Brandon, smiling; "Lucy also begins it, always get the worst of it. In plain words, dear Lucy, I can give no more time to my own affairs. A lawyer cannot play truant in term time without——"

"Losing a few guineas?" and Lucy, most smiling him.

"Worse than that—his practice and his name."

"Better those than health and peace of mind."

"Out on you—no!" said Brandon, quickly, and almost fiercely—"we need all the preciousness and pith of our life in striving to give a distinguished slavery; and when it is gained, we must not think that an humble independence would have been better! If we ever admit that thought, what fools—what weak fools we have been!—No!" continued Brandon, after a momentary pause, and in a tone earnest and grave, though not less characteristic of the man's staidness of all—"after losing all youth's engagements and manhood's leisure, in order that in our life, the all-consuming which should bend its way at last into the approaching extinction of man, I should be an effeminate, inferior indeed, did I admit, so long as the jarring parts hold together, or so long as I have the power to command its members,—this weak body to frustrate the labour of its better and

nobler portion, and command that which it is ordained to serve."

Lucy knew not while she listened, half in fear, half in admiration, to her singular relation, that at the very moment he thus spoke, his disease was preying upon him in one of its most relentless moods, without the power of wringing from him a single outward token of his torture. But she wanted nothing to increase her pity and affection for a man who, in consequence, perhaps, of his ordinary surface of worldly and cold properties of temperament, never failed to leave an indelible impression on all who had ever seen that temperament broken through by deeper, though often by more evil feelings.

"Shall you go to Lady ——'s rout?" asked Brandon, easily sliding back into common topics. "Lord Manleverer requested me to ask you."

"That depends on you and my father!"

"If on me, I answer yes!" said Brandon. "I like hearing Manleverer, especially among persons who do not understand him; there is a refined and subtle sarcasm running through the commonplaces of his conversation, which cuts the good fools, like the invisible sword in the fable, that lopped off heads without consciousness the owners any other sensation than a passing and self-complacent titillation. How immeasurably superior he is in manner and address to all we meet here; does it not strike you?"

"Yes—no—I can't say that it does exactly," rejoined Lucy.

"Is that confusion tender?" thought Brandon.

"In a word," continued Lucy, "Lord Manleverer is one whom I thank pleasantly without fascination, and amuse without brilliancy. He is evidently accomplished in mind, and graceful in manner; and withal, the most uninteresting person I ever met."

"Women have not often thought so!" said Brandon.

"I cannot believe that they can think otherwise."

A certain expression, partaking of scorn, played over Brandon's hard features. It was a noticeable trait in him, that while he was most anxious to impress Lucy with a favourable opinion of Lord Mauleverer, he was never quite able to mask a certain satisfaction at any jest at the Earl's expense, or any opinion derogatory to his general character for pleasing the opposite sex; and this satisfaction was no sooner conceived, than it was immediately combated by the vexation he felt, that Lucy did not seem to share his own desire that she should become the wife of the courtier. There appeared as if, in that respect, there was a contest in his mind between interest on one hand, and private dislike, or contempt, on the other.

"You judge women wrongly!" said Brandon. "Ladies never know each other; of all persons, Mauleverer is best calculated to win them, and experience has proved my assertion. The proudest lot I know for a woman would be the thorough conquest of Lord Mauleverer; but it is impossible. He may be gallant, but he will never be subdued. He defies the whole female world, and with justice and impunity. Enough of him. Sing to me, dear Lucy."

The time for the ball approached, and Lucy, who was a charming girl, and had nothing of the angel about her, was sufficiently fond of gaiety, dancing, music, and admiration, to feel her heart beat high at the expectation of the event.

At last, the day itself came. Brandon dined alone with Mauleverer, having made the arrangement that he, with the earl, was to join his brother and niece at the ball. Mauleverer, who hated state, except on great occasions, when no man displayed it with a

better grace, never suffered his servants to wait at dinner when he was alone, or with one of his peculiar friends. The attendants remained without, and were summoned at will by a bell laid beside the host.

The conversation was unrestrained.

"I am perfectly certain, Brandon," said Mauleverer, "that if you were to live tolerably well, you would soon get the better of your nervous complaints. It is all poverty of blood, believe me.—Some more of the fins, eh?—No!—oh, hang your abstemiousness, it is d—d unfriendly to eat so little! Talking of fins and friends—heaven defend me from ever again forming an intimacy with a pedantic epicure, especially if he puns!"

"Why—what has a pedant to do with fins?"

"I will tell you—(Ah, this Madeira!)—I suggested to Lord Dareville, who affects the gourmand, what a capital thing a dish all fins—(turbot's fins)—might be made. 'Capital!' said he, in a rapture, 'dine on it with me to-morrow.' 'Valentines!' said I. The next day, after indulging in a pleasing reverie all the morning as to the manner in which Dareville's cook, who is not without genius, would accomplish the grand idea, I betook myself punctually to my engagement. Would you believe it? When the cover was removed, the sacrilegious dog of an Amphitryon had put into the dish *Cicero de Finibus*. 'There is a work all fins!' said he."

"Atrocious jest!" exclaimed Brandon, solemnly.

"Was it not? Whenever the gastronomists set up a religious inquisition, I trust they will roast every impious rascal who treats the divine mystery with levity. Pun upon cooking, indeed! *A propos* of Dareville, he is to come into the administration."

"You astonish me!" said Brandon; "I never heard that; I don't know

him. He has very little power; has he any talent?"

"Yes, a very great one,—*acquired* though!"

"What is it?"

"A pretty wife!"

"My lord!" exclaimed Brandon, abruptly, and half rising from his seat.

Mauleverer looked up hastily, and, on seeing the expression of his companion's face, coloured deeply; there was a silence for some moments.

"Tell me," said Brandon, indifferently, helping himself to vegetables, for he seldom touched meat; and a more amusing contrast can scarcely be conceived, than that between the earnest epigramism of Mauleverer, and the careless contempt of the sublime art manifested by his guest:—"tell me, you who necessarily know every thing, whether the government really is entangled, whether you are to have the matter, and I—mark the difference!—the judgeship."

"Why no, I imagine, it will be arranged, viz. if you will consent to hang up the rogues, instead of living by the heels!"

"One may unite both!" returned Brandon. "But I believe, in general, it is *more* need, for we live by the rogues, and it is only the fools we are able to hang up. You ask me if I will take the judgeship. I would not—no, I would rather cut my hand off; and the lawyer spoke with great bitterness—*for*—sake my present career, despite all the obstacles that now encumber it, did I think that this miserable body would suffer me for two years longer to pursue it."

"You shock me!" said Mauleverer, a little affected, but nevertheless applying the cayenne to his cucumber with his unusual unerring nicety of tact. "You shock me, but you are considerably better than you were."

"It is not," continued Brandon, who was rather speaking to himself

than to *his friend*—"it is not that I am unable to conquer the pain, and to master the recalcant nerves; but I feel myself growing weaker and weaker beneath the continual exertion of my remaining powers, and I shall die before I have gained half my objects, if I do not leave the labours which are literally tearing me to pieces."

"But," said Lord Mauleverer, who was the idlest of men, "the judgeship is not an easy sinecure."

"No! but there is less demand on the mind in that station, than in my present one;" and Brandon paused before he continued. "Candidly, Mauleverer, you do not think they will deceive me? you do not think they mean to leave me to this political death without writing '*Resurgam*' over the hatchment?"

"They dare not!" said Mauleverer, quaffing his fourth glass of Madeira.

"Well! I have decided on my change of life," said the lawyer, with a slight sigh.

"So have I on my change of opinion," chimed in the earl. "I will tell you what opinions seem to me like."

"What?" said Brandon abstractedly.

"*Trees!*" answered Mauleverer, quaintly. "If they can be made serviceable by standing, don't part with a stick; but when they are of that growth that sells well, or whenever they shut out a *fine prospect*, cut them down, and pack them off by all manner of means!—And now for the second course."

"I wonder," said the earl, when our political worthies were again alone "whether there ever existed a minister who cared three straws for the people—*many* care for *their party*, but as for the country——"

"It is all fiddlestick!" added the lawyer, with more significance than grace.

"Right, it is all fiddlestick, as you tersely express it. King, Constitution

and Church, for ever! which, being interpreted, means—first, King, or Crown influence, judgeships, and parsons;—secondly, Constitution, or fees to the lawyer, places to the statesman, laws for the rich, and Game Laws for the poor;—thirdly, Church, or livings for our younger sons, and starvings for their curates!”

“Ha, ha!” said Brandon, laughing sardonically; we know human nature!”

“And how it may be gulled!” quoth the courtier. “Here’s a health to your niece! and may it not be long before you hail her as your friend’s bride!”

“Bride, *et cetera*,” said Brandon, with a sneer, meant only for his own satisfaction. “But, mark me, my dear lord, do not be too sure of her—she is a singular girl, and of more independence than the generality of women. She will not think of your rank and station in estimating you; she will think only of their owner; and pardon me if I suggest to you, who know the sex so well, one plan that it may not be unadvisable for you to pursue. Don’t let her fancy you entirely hers; rouse her jealousy, pique her pride—let her think you unconquerable, and, unless she is unlike all women, she will want to conquer you.”

The earl smiled. “I must take my chance!” said he, with a confident tone.

“The hoary coxcomb!” muttered Brandon between his teeth: “now will his folly spoil all.”

“And that reminds me,” continued Mauleverer, “that time wanes, and dinner is not over; let us not hurry, but let us be silent, to enjoy the more. These truffles in champagne—do taste them, they would raise the dead.”

The lawyer smiled, and accepted the kindness, though he left the delicacy untouched; and Mauleverer, whose soul was in his plate, saw not the heartless rejection.

Meanwhile, the youthful boy

had already entered the theatre of pleasure, and was now seated with the squire, at the upper end of the half-filled ball room.

A gay lady of the fashion at that time, and of that half and half rank to which belonged the aristocracy of Bath,—one of those curious persons we meet with in the admirable novels of Miss Burney, as appertaining to the order of fine ladies,—made the trio with our heiress and her father, and pointed out to them by name the various characters that entered the apartments. She was still in the full tide of scandal, when an unusual sensation was visible in the environs of the door; three strangers of marked mien, gay dress, and an air which, though differing in each, was in all alike remarkable for a sort of “dashing” assurance, made their *entrée*. One was of uncommon height, and possessed of an exceedingly fine head of hair; another was of a more quiet and unpretending aspect, but, nevertheless, he wore upon his face a supercilious, yet not ill-humoured expression; the third was many years younger than his companions, strikingly handsome in face and figure, altogether of a better taste in dress, and possessing a manner that, though it had equal ease, was not equally noticeable for impudence and swagger.

“Who can those be?” said Lucy’s female friend in a wondering tone. “I never saw them before—they must be great people—they have all the *airs* of persons of quality!—Dear, how odd that I should not know them!”

While the good lady, who, like all good ladies of that stamp, thought people of quality had *airs*, was thus lamenting her ignorance of the new comers, a general whisper of a similar import was already circulating round the room;—“Who are they?” and the universal answer was, “Can’t tell—never saw them before!”

(1) strangers seemed by no means

displeased with the product and immediate means that he made. They stood in the most conspicuous part of the room, enjoying among themselves, a low conversation, frequently broken by fits of laughter; tokens, we need not add, of their superlatively good breeding. The handsome figure of the youngest stranger, and the stately and seemingly unconscious grace of his attitudes, were not, however, unworthy of the admiration he excited; and even his laughing smile as it really was, displayed so dazzling a set of teeth, and was accompanied by such brilliant eyes, that before he had been ten minutes in the room, there was scarcely a young lady under thirty who was not disposed to fall in love with him.

Apparently heedless of the various remarks which reached their ears, our strangers, after they had from their station sufficiently surveyed the beauties of the hall, strolled arm-in-arm through the rooms. Having summoned through the hall and card rooms, they passed the door that led to the entrance passage, and gazed, with other visitors, upon the new comers ascending the stairs. Here the two younger strangers renewed their whispered conversation, while the eldest, who was also the tallest one, carefully leaning against the wall, employed himself for a few moments in thrusting his fingers through his hair. In finishing this occupation, the peculiar state of his ruffles forced itself upon the observation of our gentleman, who, after pausing for some moments on an ominous rent in the right ruffle, muttered some indistinct words, like, "the oak of that unforgotten pistol," and then tucked up the mutilated ornament with a peculiar fumbling motion of the fingers of his left hand: the next moment, diverted by a new care, the stranger applied his digital members to the arranging and caressing of a remarkable

splendid brooch, set in the bosom of a shirt, the rude texture of which formed a singular contrast to the magnificence of the embellishment, and the fineness of the one ruffle suffered by our modern Hyperion to make its appearance beneath his cinnamon-coloured coat-sleeve. These little personal arrangements completed, and a dazzling snuff-box released from the confinement of a side-pocket, tapped thrice and lightened of two pinches of its titillating luxury, the stranger now, with the guardlan eye of friendship, directed a searching glance to the dress of his friends. There, all appeared meet for his strictest scrutiny, save, indeed, that the supercilious-looking stranger having just drawn forth his gloves, the lining of his coat-pocket—which was rather soiled into the bargain—had not returned to its internal station; the tall stranger, seeing this little indegance, kindly thrust three fingers with a sudden and light drive into his friend's pocket, and effectually repulsed the forwardness of the intrusive lining. The supercilious stranger no sooner felt the touch, than he started back, and whispered his officious companion,—

"What! among friends, Ned! Pie now; curb the nature in thee for one night, at least."

Before he of the flowing locks had time to answer, the master of the ceremonies, who had for the last three minutes been cycling the strangers through his glass, stepped forward with a sliding bow, and the handsome gentleman taking upon himself the superiority and precedence over his comrades, was the first to return the courtesy. He did this with so good a grace, and so pleasing an expression of countenance, that the censor of bows was charmed at once, and, with a second and more profound salutation introduced himself and his office.

"You would like to dance, probably, gentlemen!" he asked, glancing

at each, but directing his words to the one who had prepossessed him.

"You are very good," said the comely stranger; "and, for my part, I shall be extremely indebted to you for the exercise of your powers in my behalf. Allow me to return with you to the ball-room, and I can there point out to you the objects of my especial admiration."

The master of the ceremonies bowed as before, and he and his new acquaintance strolled into the ball room, followed by the two comrades of the latter.

"Have you been long in Bath, sir?" inquired the monarch of the rooms.

"No, indeed! we only arrived this evening."

"From London?"

"No: we made a little tour across the country."

"Ah! very pleasant, this fine weather."

"Yes; especially in the evenings."

"Oho!—romantic!" thought the man of balls, as he rejoined aloud, "Why the nights *are* agreeable, and the moon is particularly favourable to us."

"Not always!" quoth the stranger.

"True—true, the night before last was dark; but, in general, surely the moon has been very bright."

The stranger was about to answer, but checked himself, and simply bowed his head as in assent.

"I wonder who they are!" thought the master of the ceremonies. "Pray, sir," said he, in a low tone, "is that gentleman—that *tall* gentleman, any way related to Lord ——? I cannot but think I see a family likeness."

"Not in the least related to his lordship," answered the stranger; "but he is of a family that have made a noise in the world; though he (as well as my other friend) is merely a commoner!" laying a stress on the last word.

"Nothing, sir, can be more respectable than a commoner of family,"

returned the polite Mr. ——, with a bow.

"I agree with you, sir," answered the stranger, with another. "But, heavens!"—and the stranger started; for at that moment his eye caught for the first time, at the far end of the room, the youthful and brilliant countenance of Lucy Brandon,—“do I see rightly? or is that Miss Brandon?”

"It is indeed that lovely young lady," said Mr. ——. "I congratulate you on knowing one so admired. I suppose that you, being blessed with her acquaintance, do not need the formality of my introduction."

"Umph!" said the stranger, rather shortly and uncourteously—"No! Perhaps you had better present me!"

"By what name shall I have that honour, sir?" discreetly inquired the nomenclator.

"Clifford!" answered the stranger;

"Captain Clifford!"

Upon this, the prim master of the ceremonies, threading his path through the now fast-filling room, approached towards Lucy to obey Mr. Clifford's request. Meanwhile, that gentleman, before he followed the steps of the tutelary spirit of the place, paused, and said to his friends, in a tone careless, yet not without command, "Hark ye, gentlemen, oblige me by being as civil and silent as ye are able, and don't thrust yourselves upon me, as you are accustomed to do, whenever you see no opportunity of indulging me with that honour with the least show of propriety!" So saying, and waiting no reply, Mr. Clifford hastened after the master of the ceremonies.

"Our friend grows mighty impetuous!" said Long Ned, whom our readers have already recognised in the tall stranger.

"'Tis the way with your rising geniuses," answered the moralising Augustus Tomlinson. "Suppose we go to the card-room, and get up a rubber!"

"Well thought of," said Ned, yawning,—"a thing he was very apt to do in society," and I wish nothing worse to those who try our *ruthers*, than that they may be well cleaned by them." Upon this witticism the *Colossus of Roads*, glancing towards the glass, strutted off, arm in arm with his companion to the card room.

During this short conversation the re-introduction of Mr. Clifford (the stranger of the Rectory and deliverer of Dr. Shapperton) to Lucy Brandon had been effected, and the hand of the heiress was already engaged (according to the custom of that time) for the two ensuing dances.

It was about twenty minutes after the above presentation had taken place, that Lord Mauleverer and William Brandon entered the rooms, and the buzz created by the appearance of the noted peer and the distinguished lawyer had scarcely subsided, before the royal personage expected to grace the "festive scene" (as the newspapers say of a great room with plenty of miserable-looking people in it) arrived. The most attractive persons in Europe may be found among the royal family of England, and the great personage then at Bath, in consequence of certain political intrigues, waded, at that time especially, to make himself as popular as possible. Having gone the round of the old ladies, and assured them, as the *Court Journal* assures the old ladies at this day, that they were "morning stars," and "swan-like wonders," the Prince espied Brandon, and immediately beckoned to him with a familiar gesture. The smooth but saturnine lawyer approached the royal presence with the manner that peculiarly distinguished him, and which blended, in no ungraceful mixture, a species of stiffness, that passed with the crowd for native independence, with a supple insinuation, that was usually deemed the token of latent benevolence of

heart. There was something, indeed, in Brandon's address that always pleased the great; and they liked him the better, because, though he stood on no idle political points, mere differences in the view taken of a hair-breadth,—such as a corn law, or a Catholic bill; alteration in the church, or a reform in parliament; yet he invariably talked so like a man of honour (except when with Mauleverer), that his urbanity seemed attachment to individuals; and his concessions to power, sacrifices of private opinion for the sake of obliging his friends.

"I am very glad, indeed," said the royal personage, "to see Mr. Brandon looking so much better. Never was the crown in greater want of his services; and, if rumour speak true, they will soon be required in another department of his profession."

Brandon bowed, and answered:—

"So, please your royal highness, they will always be at the command of a king from whom I have experienced such kindness, in any capacity for which his Majesty may deem them fitting."

"It is true, then!" said his royal highness, significantly. "I congratulate you! The quiet dignity of the bench must seem to you a great change after a career so busy and restless!"

"I fear I shall feel it so at first, your royal highness," answered Brandon, "for I like even the toil of my profession; and at this moment, when I am in full practice, it more than ever—but checking himself at once) his Majesty's wishes, and my satisfaction in complying with them, are more than sufficient to remove any momentary regret I might otherwise have felt in quitting those toils which have now become to me a second nature."

"It is possible," rejoined the Prince, "that his Majesty took into consideration the delicate state of

health which, in common with the whole public, I grieve to see the papers have attributed to one of the most distinguished ornaments of the bar."

"So, please your royal highness," answered Brandon, coolly, and with a smile which the most piercing eye could not have believed the mask to the agony then gnawing at his nerves, "it is the interest of my rivals to exaggerate the little ailments of a weak constitution. I thank Providence that I am now entirely recovered; and at no time of my life have I been less unable to discharge—so far as my *nature* and *mental* incapacities will allow—the duties of any occupation, however arduous. Nay, as the brute grows accustomed to the mill, so have I grown wedded to business; and even the brief relaxation I have now allowed myself seems to me rather irksome than pleasurable."

"I rejoice to hear you speak thus," answered his royal highness, warmly; "and I trust for many years, and," added he, in a lower tone, "in the highest chamber of the senate, that we may profit by your talents. The times are those in which many occasions occur, that oblige all true friends of the constitution to quit minor employment for that great constitutional one that concerns us all, the highest and the meanest; and (the royal voice sank still lower) I feel justified in assuring you, that the office of chief justice alone is not considered by his Majesty as a sufficient reward for your generous sacrifice of present ambition to the difficulties of government."

Brandon's proud heart swelled, and that moment the fiercest pains of hell would scarcely have been felt.

While the aspiring schemer was thus agreeably engaged, Mauleverer, sliding through the crowd with that grace which charmed every one, old and young, and addressing to all he

knew some lively or affectionate remark, made his way to the dancers, among whom he had just caught a glimpse of Lucy. "I wonder," he thought, "whom she is dancing with. I hope it is that ridiculous fellow, Mossop, who tells a good story against himself; or that handsome ass, Belmont, who looks at his own legs, instead of seeming to have eyes for no one but his partner. Ah! if Tarquin had but known women as well as I do, he would have had no reason to be rough with Lucretia. 'Tis a thousand pities that experience comes, in women, as in the world, just when it begins to be no longer of use to us!"

As he made these moral reflections, Mauleverer gained the dancers, and beheld Lucy listening, with downcast eyes and cheeks that *evidently* blushed, to a young man, whom Mauleverer acknowledged at once to be one of the best-looking fellows he had ever seen. The stranger's countenance, despite an extreme darkness of complexion, was, to be sure, from the great regularity of the features, rather effeminate; but, on the other hand, his figure, though slender and graceful, betrayed to an experienced eye an extraordinary proportion of sinew and muscle: and even the dash of effeminacy in the countenance was accompanied by so manly and frank an air, and was so perfectly free from all coxcombry or self-conceit, that it did not in the least decrease the prepossessing effect of his appearance. An angry and bitter pang shot across that portion of Mauleverer's frame which the earl thought fit, for want of another name, to call his heart. "How cursedly pleased she looks!" muttered he. "By heaven! that stolen glance under the left eyelid, dropped as suddenly as it is raised! and *he*—*ha!*—how firmly he holds that little hand. I think I see him paddle with it; and then the dog's earnest, intent look—and she all

Nude? though she dare not look up to meet his gaze, feeling it by intuition. Oh! the demure, modest, shamefaced hypocrite! How silent she is—she can prate enough to me! I would give my promised garter if she would but talk to him. Talk—talk—laugh—prattle—only simper, in such a way, and I shall be happy! But that hateful, blushing silence—it is insupportable. Thank Heaven, the dance is over! Thank Heaven, again! I have not felt such pains since the last nightmare I had, after doing with her father!"

With a face all smiles, but with a mien in which more dignity than he ordinarily assumed was worn, Maudslayer now moved towards Lucy, who was leaning on her partner's arm. The earl, who had ample tact where his consummate selfishness did not warp it, knew well how to get the most without seeming ridiculously into the tally of seeming to play the heavy daughter. He sought rather to be lively than sentimental; and beneath the wit to conceal the suitor.

Having paid, then, with a careless gallantry, his first compliments, he entered into so adroited a conversation, interspersed with so many more or less palpably just observations on the character present, that perhaps he had never appeared to more brilliant advantage. At length, as the music was about to recommence, Maudslayer, with a careless glance at Lucy's partner, said, "Will Miss Brandon now allow me the agreeable duty of conducting her to her father?"

"I believe," answered Lucy, and her voice suddenly became timid, "that, according to the laws of the room, I am engaged to this gentleman for another dance."

Clifford, in an assured and easy tone, replied in assent.

As he spoke, Maudslayer honoured him with a more accurate survey than he had hitherto bestowed on him,

and whether or not there was any expression of contempt or superciliousness in the survey, it was sufficient to call up the indignant blood to Clifford's cheek. Returning the look with interest, he said to Lucy, "I believe, Miss Brandon, that the dance is about to begin," and Lucy, obeying the hint, left the aristocratic Maudslayer to his own meditations.

At that moment the master of the ceremonies came bowing by, half afraid to address so great a person as Maudslayer, but willing to show his respect by the profoundness of his salutation.

"Aha! my dear Mr. —!" said the earl, holding out both his hands to the Lycurgus of the rooms; "how are you? Pray can you inform me who that young—*man* is, now dancing with Miss Brandon?"

"It is—let me see—Oh! it is a Captain Clifford, my lord! a very fine young man, my lord! Has your lordship never met him?"

"Never! who is he? One under your more especial patronage!" said the earl, smiling.

"Nay, indeed!" answered the master of the ceremonies, with a shiver of gratification; "I scarcely know who he is yet; the captain only made his appearance here to-night for the first time. He came with two other gentlemen—ah! there they are!" and he pointed the earl's scrutinising attention to the elegant forms of Mr. Augustus Tomlinson and Mr. Ned Pepper, just emerging from the card-room. The swagger of the latter gentleman was so peculiarly important, that Maudslayer, angry as he was, could scarcely help laughing. The master of the ceremonies noted the earl's countenance, and remarked, that "that fine-looking man seemed disposed to give himself airs!"

"Judging from the gentleman's appearance," said the earl, drily (Ned's face, to say truth, did betoken his

affection for the bottle). "I should imagine that he was much more accustomed to give himself *thorough draughts*!"

"Ah!" renewed the *arbitrator*, who had not heard Mauleverer's observation, which was uttered in a very low voice,—"Ah! they seem real dashers!"

"Dashers!" repeated Mauleverer: "true, *haberdashers*!"

Long Ned now, having in the way of his profession acquitted himself tolerably well at the card-table, thought he had purchased the right to parade himself through the rooms, and shew the ladies what stuff a Pepper could be made of.

Leaning with his left hand on Tomlinson's arm, and employing the right in fanning himself furiously with his huge *chapeau bras*, the lengthy adventurer stalked slowly along,—now setting out one leg jauntily—now the other, and ogling "the ladies" with a kind of Irish look, viz., a look between a wink and a stare.

Released from the presence of Clifford, who kept a certain check on his companions, the apparition of Ned became glaringly conspicuous; and wherever he passed, a universal whisper succeeded.

"Who can he be?" said the widow Matmore; "'tis a droll creature: but what a head of hair!"

"For my part," answered the spinner Snerall, "I think he is a linen-draper in disguise; for I heard him talk to his companion of 'tape.'"

"Well, well," thought Mauleverer, "it would be but kind to seek out Brandon, and hint to him in what company his niece seems to have fallen!" And, so thinking, he glided to the corner where, with a grey-headed old politician, the astute lawyer was conning the affairs of Europe.

In the interim, the second dance had ended, and Clifford was conducting Lucy to her seat, each charmed

with the other, when he found himself abruptly tapped on the back, and, turning round in alarm,—for such taps were not unfamiliar to him,—he saw the cool countenance of Long Ned, with one finger sagaciously laid beside the nose.

"How now!" said Clifford, between his ground teeth, "did I not tell thee to put that huge bulk of thine as far from me as possible!"

"Humph!" grunted Ned, "if these are my thanks, I may as well keep my kindness to myself; but know you, my kid, that lawyer Brandon is here, peering through the crowd, at this very moment, in order to catch a glimpse of that woman's face of thine."

"Ha!" answered Clifford, in a very quick tone, "begone, then! I will meet you without the rooms immediately."

Clifford now turned to his partner, and bowing very low, in reality to hide his face from those sharp eyes which had once seen it in the court of Justice Burnflat, said, "I trust, madam, I shall have the honour to meet you again;—is it, if I may be allowed to ask, with your celebrated uncle that you are staying, or ——"

"With my father," answered Lucy, concluding the sentence Clifford had left unfinished; "but my uncle has been with us, though I fear he leaves us to-morrow."

Clifford's eyes sparkled; he made no answer, but, bowing again, receded into the crowd, and disappeared. Several times that night did the brightest eyes in Somersetshire rove anxiously round the rooms in search of our hero; but he was seen no more.

It was on the stairs that Clifford encountered his comrades; taking an arm of each, he gained the door without any adventure worth noting—save that, being kept back by the crowd for a few moments, the moralising Augustus Tomlinson, who honoured

the moderate Whigs by enrolling himself among their number, took up, *pour passer le temps*, a tall gold-headed cane, and, weighing it across his finger with a musing air, said, "Alas! among our supporters we often meet heads as heavy—but of what a different metal!" The crowd now permitting, Augustus was winking away with his companions, and, in that absence of mind characteristic of philosophers, unconsciously bearing with him the gold-headed

object of his reflection, when a stately footman stepping up to him, said, "Sir, my cane!"

"Cane, fellow!" said Tomlinson. "Ah, I am so absent!—Here is thy cane.—Only think of my carrying off the man's cane, Ned! ha! ha!"

"Absent, indeed!" grunted a knowing chairman, watching the receding figures of the three gentlemen: "Body o' me! but it was *the cane* that was about to be absent!"

CHAPTER XVI.

Whackerum.—"My dear rogues, dear boys, Bluster and Dingboy! you are the bravest fellows that ever scoured yet!"

SHADWELL'S SCOURERS.

"Cato, the Thessalian, was wont to say, that some things may be done unjustly, that many things may be done justly."

Lord Bacon (being a justification of every rascality).

ALMOST our three worthies had taken unto themselves a splendid lodging in Milson Street, which to please Ned was over a hair-dresser's shop; yet, instead of returning thither, or repairing to such taverns as might seem best befitting their fashion and garb, they struck at once from the gay parts of the town, and turned not till they reached a mean-looking abode in a remote suburb.

The door was opened to them by an elderly lady; and Clifford, stalking before his companions into an apartment at the back of the house, asked if the other gentlemen were come yet.

"No," returned the dame. "Old Mr. Bags came in about ten minutes ago; but, hearing more work might be done, he went out again."

"Bring the lusk and the pipes, old lanie!" cried Ned, throwing himself on a bench; "we are never at a loss for company!"

"You, indeed, never can be, who are always inseparably connected with

the object of your admiration," said Tomlinson drily, and taking up an old newspaper. Ned, who, though choleric, was a capital fellow, and could bear a joke on himself, smiled, and, drawing forth a little pair of scissors, began trimming his nails.

"Curse me," said he, after a momentary silence, "if this is not a devilish deal pleasanter than playing the fine gentleman in that great room with a rose in one's button hole! What say you, Master Lovett?"

Clifford (as heretofore, despite his other aliases, we shall designate our hero), who had thrown himself at full length on a bench at the far end of the room, and who seemed plunged into a sullen reverie, now looked up for a moment, and then, turning round and presenting the dorsal part of his body to Long Ned, muttered, "Pish!"

"Harkye, Master Lovett!" said Long Ned, colouring. "I don't know what has come over you of late; but

I would have you to learn that gentle men are entitled to courtesy and polite behaviour—and so, d'ye see, if you ride your high horse upon me, aplice my extremities if I won't have satisfaction!"

"Hist, man, be quiet," said Tomlinson, philosophically snuffing the candles—

"For companions to quarrel,
Is extremely immoral."

Don't you see that the captain is in a revery! what good man ever loves to be interrupted in his meditations?—Even Alfred the Great could not bear it! Perhaps, at this moment, with the true anxiety of a worthy chief, the captain is designing something for our welfare!"

"Captain, indeed!" muttered Long Ned, darting a wrathful look at Clifford, who had not deigned to pay any attention to Mr. Pepper's threat; "for my part I cannot conceive what was the matter with us when we chose this green slip of the gallows-tree for our captain of the district. To be sure, he did very well at first, and that robbery of the old lord was not ill planned—but lately——"

"Nay, nay," quoth Augustus, interrupting the gigantic grumbler, "the nature of man is prone to discontent. Allow that our present design of setting up the gay Lothario, and trying our chances at Bath for an heiress, is owing as much to Lovett's promptitude as to our invention."

"And what good will come of it?" returned Ned, as he lighted his pipe: "answer me that. Was I not dressed as fine as a lord—and did not I walk three times up and down that great room without being a jot the better for it?"

"Ah! but you know not how many secret conquests you may have made: you cannot win a prize by looking upon it."

"Humph!" grunted Ned, applying

himself discontentedly to the young existence of his pipe.

"As for the captain's partner," renewed Tomlinson, who maliciously delighted in exciting the jealousy of the handsome "tax-collector," for that was the designation by which Augustus thought proper to style himself and companions. "I will turn Tony if she be not already half in love with him; and did you hear the old gentleman who cut into our rubber say what a fine fortune she had? Faith, Ned, it is lucky for us two that we all agreed to go shares in our marriage speculations; I fancy the worthy captain will think it a bad bargain for himself."

"I am not so sure of that, Mr. Tomlinson," said Long Ned, sourly eyeing his comrade.

"Some women may be caught by a smooth skin and a showy manner, but *real* masculine beauty,—eyes, colour, and hair,—Mr. Tomlinson, must ultimately make its way: so hand me the brandy and cease your jaw."

"Well, well," said Tomlinson, "I'll give you a toast—'The prettiest girl in England;'—and that's Miss Brandon!"

"You shall give no such toast, sir!" said Clifford, starting from the bench.—"What the devil is Miss Brandon to you? And now, Ned,"—(seeing that the tall hero looked on him with an unfavourable aspect),—"here's my hand, forgive me if I was uncivil. Tomlinson will tell you, in a maxim, men are changeable. Here's to your health; and it shall not be my fault, gentlemen, if we have not a merry evening!"

This speech, short as it was, met with great applause from the two friends; and Clifford, as president, stationed himself in a huge chair at the head of the table. Scarcely had he assumed this dignity, before the door opened, and half-a-dozen of the gentlemen confederates trooped somewhat noisily into the apartment.

"Softly, softly, messieurs," said the president, recovering all his constitutional gravity, yet flooding it with a certain *and gent* command—"respect for the chair, if you please! 'Tis the way with all assemblies where the public purse is a matter of deferential interest."

"Hear him!" cried Tomlinson.

"What my old friend Bags?" said the president. "you have not come empty handed, I will swear; your honest face is like the table of contents to the good things in your pockets."

"Ah, Captain Clifford," said the veteran, grinning, and shaking his reverend head, "I have seen the day when there was not a lad in England foolish so largely, so comprehensively—like as I did. But, as King Lear says at Common Garden, 'I be's old now!'"

"But your zeal is as youthful as ever, my fine fellow," said the captain, smilingly. "and if you do not clean out the public as thoroughly as heretofore, it is not the fault of your inclinations."

"No, that it is not!" cried the "tax-collectors" unanimously. "And if ever a pocket is to be picked neatly, quietly, and efficiently," added the complimentary Clifford, "I do not know to this day, throughout the three kingdoms, a neater, subtler, and more effective set of fingers than Old Bags's!"

The veteran bowed disdainfully, and took his seat among the watchful good wishes of the whole assembly.

"And now, gentlemen," said Clifford, as soon as the members had provided themselves with their wanted bumper, potatory and frugal, "let us hear your adventures, and relieve our eyes with their produce. The valiant Attie shall begin—but first, a toast.—'May those who live from a hole a never leap from a tree!'"

This toast being drunk with enthu-

siastic applause, Fighting Attie began the recital of his little history.

"You sees, captain," said he, putting himself in a martial position, and looking Clifford full in the face, "that I'm not addicted to much blarney. Little cry and much wool is my motto. At ten o'clock, A.M. saw the enemy—in the shape of a Doctor of Divinity. 'Blow me,' says I to Old Bags, 'but I'll do his reverence!'—'Blow me,' says Old Bags, 'but you shan't—you'll have us scragged if you touches the church.'—'My grandmother!' says I. Bags tells the pals—all in a fuss about it—what care I!—I puts on a decent dress, and goes to the doctor as a decayed soldier, *not* sup-
plies the shops in the turning line. His reverence—a fat jolly dog as ever you see—was at dinner over a fine roast pig. So I tells him I have some bargains at home for him. Spice me, if the doctor did not think he had got a prize! so he puts on his boots, and he comes with me to my house. But when I gets him into a lane, out come my pops. 'Give up, doctor,' says I; 'others must share the goods of the church now.' You has no idea what a row he made—but I did the thing, and there's an end on't."

"Bravo, Attie!" cried Clifford, and the word echoed round the board. Attie put a purse on the table, and the next gentleman was called to confession.

"It skills not, boots not," gentlest of readers, to record each of the narratives that now followed one another. Old Bags, in especial, preserved his well-earned reputation, by emptying six pockets, which had been filled with every possible description of petty valuables. Peasant and prince appeared alike to have come under his hands; and, perhaps, the good old man had done in one town more towards effecting an equality of goods among different ranks than all the Reformers, from Cornwall to Carlisle. Yet so

keen was his appetite for the sport, that the veteran appropriator absently burst into tears at not having "forked more."

"I love a warm-hearted enthusiasm," cried Clifford, handling the movables, while he gazed lovingly on the ancient purloiner.—"May new cases never teach us to forget Old Bags!"

As soon as this "sentiment" had been duly drunk, and Mr. Bagshot had dried his tears and applied himself to his favourite drink—which, by the way, was "blue ruin,"—the work of division took place. The discretion and impartiality of the captain in this arduous part of his duty attracted universal admiration; and each gentleman having carefully pouched his share, the youthful president hemmed thrice, and the society became aware of a purposed speech.

"Gentlemen!" began Clifford,—and his main supporter, the sapient Augustus, shouted out "Hear!"—"Gentlemen, you all know that when, some months ago, you were pleased,—partly at the instigation of Gentleman George,—God bless him!—partly from the exaggerated good opinion expressed of me by my friends,—to elect me to the high honour of the command of this district, I myself was by no means ambitious to assume that rank, which I knew well was far beyond my merits, and that responsibility which I knew, with equal certainty, was too weighty for my powers. Your voices, however, overruled my own; and as Mr. Muddlepudd, the great metaphysician, in that excellent paper 'The Asinæum' was wont to observe, 'the susceptibilities, innate, extensible, incomprehensible, and eternal,' existing in my bosom, were infinitely more powerful than the shallow suggestions of reason—that ridiculous thing which all wise men and judicious Asinæans sedulously stifle."

"Plague take the man, what is he

talking about?" said Long Ned, who we have seen was of an envious temper, in a whisper to Old Bags. Old Bags shook his head.

"In a word, gentlemen," renewed Clifford, "your kindness overpowered me; and, despite my cooler inclinations, I accepted your flattering proposal. Since then I have endeavoured, so far as I have been able, to advance your interests; I have kept a vigilant eye upon all my neighbours; I have, from county to county, established numerous correspondents; and our exertions have been carried on with a promptitude that has ensured success."

"Gentlemen, I do not wish to boast, but on these nights of periodical meetings, when every quarter brings us to go halves—when we meet in private to discuss the affairs of the public—show our earnings, as it were, in privy council, and divide them amicably, as it were, in the cabinet—('Hear! hear!' from Mr. Tomlinson),—it is customary for your captain for the time being to remind you of his services, engage your pardon for his deficiencies, and your good wishes for his future exertions.—Gentlemen! has it ever been said of Paul Lovett that he heard of a prize and forgot to tell you of his news?—('Never! never!' loud cheering).—Has it ever been said of him that he sent others to seize the booty, and stayed at home to think how it should be spent?—('No! no!' repeated cheers).—Has it ever been said of him that he took less share than his due of your danger, and more of your guineas?—(Cries in the negative, accompanied with vehement applause).—Gentlemen, I thank you for these flattering and audible testimonials in my favour; but the points on which I have dwelt, however necessary to my honour, would prove but little for my merits; they might be worthy notice in your comrade, you demand more subtle duties in your chief.

Gentlemen! has it ever been said of Paul Levett that he sent out brave men on further hopes? that he has earned your own heads by such attempts in acquiring pictures of King George? that zeal, in short, was greater in him than caution? or that his love of a quid* ever made him neglectful of your just aversion to a quid?†—Unanimous cheering.

"Gentlemen! since I have had the honour to preside over your welfare, Fortune, which favours the bold, has not been unmerciful to you! But three of our companions have been missed from our peaceful festivities. One gentleman, I myself expelled from our corps for ungentlemanlike practices: he picked pockets of *fiddlers*:—it was a vulgar employment. Some of you, gentlemen, have done the same for amusement—Jack Littlefork did it for occupation. I expostulated with him in public and in private; Mr. Pepper put his society; Mr. Tomlinson read him an essay on Real Greatness of Soul: all was in vain. He was pumped by the mob for the theft of a *bird's eye wiper*. The fault I had borne with—the detection was unpardonable. I expelled him—Who's here so base as would be a *jack-knifer*? If any, speak; for him have I offended! Who's here so rude as would not be a gentleman? If any, speak; for him have I offended! I pause for a reply! What, none? then none have I offended. (Loud cheers). Gentlemen, I may truly add, that I have done no more to Jack Littlefork than you should do to Paul Levett! The next vacancy in our ranks was occasioned by the loss of Patrick Blackbriar. You know, gentlemen, the vehement exertions that I made to save that misguided creature, whom I had made exertions no less earnest to instruct. But he chose to ascribe

under the name of the 'Honourable Captain Smugg,' the Peccage gave him the lie at once; his case was one of aggravation, and he was so remarkably ugly, that he 'created no interest.' He left us for a foreign exile; and if, as a man, I lament him, I confess to you, gentlemen, as a 'tax-collector,' I am easily consoled.

"Our third loss must be fresh in your memory. Peter Popwell, as bold a fellow as ever breathed, is no more! (A movement in the assembly).—Peace be with him! He died on the field of battle; shot dead by a Scotch colonel, whom poor Popwell thought to rob of nothing with an empty pistol. His memory, gentlemen—in solemn silence!

"These make the catalogue of our losses,"—(resumed the youthful chief, as soon as the "red cup had crowned the memory" of Peter Popwell),—"I am proud, even in sorrow, to think that the blame of those losses rests not with me. And now, friends and followers! Gentlemen of the Road, the Street, the Theatre, and the Shop! Prigs, Toby men, and Squires of the Cross! According to the laws of our Society, I resign into your hands that power which for two quarterly terms you have confided to mine, ready to sink into your ranks as a comrade, nor unwilling to renounce the painful honour I have borne;—borne with much infirmity, it is true, but at least with a sincere desire to serve that cause with which you have intrusted me."

No saying, the Captain descended from his chair amidst the most uproarious applause, and as soon as the first burst had partially subsided, Augustus Tomlinson rising, with one hand in his breeches' pocket and the other stretched out, said:

"Gentlemen, I move that Paul Levett be again chosen as our Captain for the ensuing term of three months. — (Deafening cheers).—Much might I

* Quid—a guinea. † Quid—a prison.
‡ Handkerchiefs.

say about his surpassing merits: but why dwell upon that which is obvious! Life is short! Why should speeches be long! Our lives, perhaps, are shorter than the lives of other men: why should not our harangues be of a suitable brevity! Gentlemen, I shall say but one word in favour of my excellent friend; of mine, say I! ay, of mine, of yours. He is a friend to all of us! A prime minister is not more useful to his followers, and more burthensome to the public than I am proud to say is—Paul Lovett!—(Loud plaudits).—What I shall urge in his favour is simply this: the man whom opposite parties unite in praising must have supereminent merit. Of all your companions, gentlemen, Paul Lovett is the only man who to that merit can advance a claim.—(Applause).—You all know, gentlemen, that our body has long been divided into two factions; each jealous of the other—each desirous of ascendancy—and each envious which shall put the greatest number of fingers into the public pie. In the language of the vulgar, the one faction would be called ‘swindlers,’ and the other ‘highwaymen.’ I, gentlemen, who am fond of finding new names for things, and for persons, and am a bit of a politician, call the one *Whigs*, and the other *Tories*.—(Clamorous cheering).—Of the former body, I am esteemed no unimportant member; of the latter faction, Mr. Bags is justly considered the most shining ornament. Mr. Attie and Mr. Edward Pepper can scarcely be said to belong entirely to either: they unite the good qualities of both: ‘British compounds’ some term them: I term them *Liberal Aristocrats*!—(Cheers).—I now call upon you all, Whig or Swindler; Tory or Highwayman; ‘British Compounds’ or Liberal Aristocrats; I call upon you all, to name me one man whom you will all agree to elect!”

All—“Lovett for ever!”

“Gentlemen!” continued the rascalous Augustus, “that shout is sufficient; without another word, I propose, as your Captain, Mr. Paul Lovett.”

“And I seconds the motion!” said old Mr. Bags.

Our hero, being now, by the unanimous applause of his confederates, restored to the chair of office, returned thanks in a neat speech; and Scarlet Jem declared, with great solemnity, that it did equal honour to his head and heart.

The thunders of eloquence being hushed, *flashes of lightning*, or, as the vulgar say, “*glasses of gin*,” gleamed about. Good old Mr. Bags stuck, however, to his blue ruin, and Attie to the bottle of bingo: some, among whom were Clifford and the wise Augustus, called for wine; and Clifford, who exerted himself to the utmost in supporting the gay duties of his station, took care that the song should vary the pleasures of the bowl. Of the songs we have only been enabled to preserve two. The first is by Long Ned: and, though we confess we can see but little in it, yet (perhaps from some familiar allusion or another, with which we are necessarily unacquainted,) it produced a prodigious sensation,—it ran thus:—

THE ROGUE'S RECIPE.

“Your honest fool a rogue to make,
As great as can be seen, sir,—
Two hackney’d rogues you first must take,
Then place your fool between, sir.

Virtue’s a dunghill cock, ashamed
Of self when pair’d with game ones;
And wildest elephants are tamed
If stuck betwixt two tame ones.”

The other effusion with which we have the honour to favour our readers is a very amusing duet which took place between Fighting Attie and a tall thin robber, who was a dangerous

follow in a mob, and was therefore called Molding Francis; it was commenced by the latter:—

MOLDING FRANCIS.

"The best of all rubbers as ever I know'd,
Is the bold Fighting Attie, the pride of the road:—

Fighting Attie, my hero, I saw you to-day
A prison full of soldiers legs made;
And as I sat at present, I'm now in the lay,
I'll become a good, if you please;
Old good Fighting Attie—the knowing—the natty—

He says it must sure be confess,
Though your shappers and snobbers are
Pretty good rubbers,
A soldier is always the best."

FIGHTING ATTIE.

"Stubble your white,
You wants to trick I.
Lead you my pants?
Not one, by Dickey."

MOLDING FRANCIS.

"Oh, what a beast is a riggardly ruffler,
Nothing grabbing all for himself;
Hark at old fellow, I want you a ruffler,
Since you can't give more pounds of tin pull,
You has not a heart for the general dis-
tress:—

You were not a mag if our party should
fail.

And if Sautlat Jem were not good at a press,
By Gosh, it would soon be all up with us
all:—

Oh, Sautlat Jem, he is trusty and true,
Like his wife, to his pull, sticks his conscience
to him.

But I woe I despise the fellow who prizes
More his own ends than the popular stock,
sir.

And the soldier as bones for himself and his
corps.

Should be taxed like a traitor himself at
the book, sir."

This severe response of Molding Francis did not in the least rattle the constitutional backbone of Fighting Attie; but the wary Clifford, seeing that Francis had lost his temper, and watched over the least sign of disturbance among the company,

instantly called for another song, and Molding Francis sullenly knocked down Old Bags.

The night was far gone, and so were the wits of the honest tax-gatherers; when the president commanded silence, and the convivialists knew that their chief was about to issue forth the orders for the ensuing term. Nothing could be better timed than such directions,—during merriment, and before oblivion.

"Gentlemen!" said the captain, "I will now, with your leave, impart to you all the plans I have formed for each. You, Attie, shall repair to London: be the Windsor road and the purfurs of Pimlico your especial care. Look you, my hero, to these letters; they will apprise you of much work: I need not caution you to silence. Like the oyster, you never open your mouth but for something. — Honest Old Bags, a rich grazer will be in Smithfield on Thursday; his name is Hodges, and he will have somewhat like a thousand pounds in his pouch. He is green, fresh, and avuncular; offer to assist him in defrauding his neighbours in a bargain, and cease not till then hast done that with him which he wished to do to others. Be—excellent old man,—like the frog fish, which fishes for other fishes with two horns that resemble bait; the prey dart at the horns, and are down the throat in an instant!—For thee, dearest Jem, these letters announce a prize—fat is Parson Piant; full is his purse; and he rides from Henley to Oxford on Friday—I need say no more! As for the rest of you, gentlemen, on this paper you will see your destinations fixed. I warrant you, ye will find enough work till we meet again this day three months. Myself, Augustus Tomlinson, and Ned Pepper, remain at Bath; we have business in hand, gentlemen, of paramount importance; should you by accident meet us, never acknowledge

Hold your tongue.

us—we are *in* : striking at high game, and putting on falcon's plumes to do it in character—you understand; but this accident can scarcely occur, for none of you will remain at Bath: by to-morrow night, may the road receive you. And now, gentlemen, spee! the glass, and I'll give you a sentiment by way of a spur to it—

"Much sweeter than honey
Is other men's money!"

Our hero's maxim was received with all the enthusiasm which agreeable truisms usually create. And old Mr. Bags rose to address the chair; unhappily for the edification of the audience, the veteran's foot slipped before he had proceeded farther than "Mr. President," he fell to the earth with a sort of reel—

"Like shooting stars he fell to rise no more!"

His body became a capital footstool for the luxurious Pepper. Now Augustus Tomlinson and Clifford, exchanging looks, took every possible pains to promote the hilarity of the evening; and, before the third hour of morning had sounded, they had the satisfaction of witnessing the effects of their benevolent labours in the prostrate forms of all their companions. Long Ned, naturally more capacious than the rest, succumbed the last.

"As leaves of trees," said the chairman, waving his hand—

"As leaves of trees the race of man is found,
Now *fresh with dew*, now withering on the ground."

"Well said, my Hector of Highways!" cried Tomlinson; and then helping himself to the wine, while he employed his legs in removing the supine forms of Scarlet Jem and Long Ned, he continued the Homeric quotation, with a pompous and self-gratulatory tone,—

"No flourish *these* when *those* have passed
away!"

"We managed to get rid of our friends," began Clifford—

"Like Whigs in place," interrupted the politician.

"Right, Tomlinson, thanks to the milder properties of our drink, and, perchance, to the stronger qualities of our heads; and now tell me, my friend, what think you of our chance of success? Shall we catch an heiress or no?"

"Why really," said Tomlinson, "women are like those calculations in arithmetic, which one can never bring to an exact account; for my part, I shall stuff my calves and look out for a widow. You, my good fellow, seem to stand a fair chance with Miss —"

"Oh, name her not!" cried Clifford, colouring, even through the flush which wine had spread over his countenance. "Ours are not the lips by which her name should be breathed; and faith, when I think of her, I do it anonymously."

"What, *have* you ever thought of her before this evening?"

"Yes, for months," answered Clifford. "You remember some time ago, when we formed the plan for robbing Lord Mauleverer, how, rather for frolic than profit, you robbed Dr. Sleperton, of Warlock, while I compassionately walked home with the old gentleman. Well, at the parson's house, I met Miss Brandon;—mind, if I speak of her by name, *you* must not; and, by Heaven!—but I won't swear.—I accompanied her home. You know, before morning we robbed Lord Mauleverer; the affair made a noise, and I feared to endanger you all if I appeared in the vicinity of the robbery. Since then, business diverted my thoughts; we formed the plan of trying a matrimonial speculation at Bath. I came hither—guess my surprise at seeing *her*—"

"And your delight," added Tomlinson, "at hearing she is as rich as she is pretty."

"No!" answered Clifford, quickly; "that thought gives me no pleasure—you stare. I will try and explain. You know, dear Tomlinson, I'm not much of a carder, and yet my heart swells when I look on that innocent face, and hear that soft, happy voice, and think that my love to her can be only pain and disgrace; nay, that my very address is contamination, and my very glance towards her an insult."

"Hay-day!" quoth Tomlinson; "have you been under my instructions, and learned the true value of words? and can you have any scruples left on so easy a point of conscience? True, you may call your representing yourself to her as an unprofessional gentleman, and so winning her affection, deceit, but why call it deceit when a '*gentle for intrigue*' is so much nearer a phrase. In like manner, by marrying the young lady, if you say *you have ruined her*, you justly deserve to be annihilated; but why not say you have '*ruined yourself*' and then, my dear fellow, you will have done the most justifiable thing in the world."

"Pooh, men!" said Clifford, peevishly. "none of thy sophisms and subtleties!"

"By the soul of Sir Edward Coke, I am serious!—But look you, my friend, this is not a matter where it is convenient to have a tender-footed discussion."

You see these fellows on the ground—all dead, clever, and so forth—but you and I are of a different order. I have had a classical education, seen the world, and mixed in decent society; you, too, had not been long a member of our club, before you distinguished yourself above us all. Fortune smiled on your youthful audacity. You grew particular in horses and dogs, frequented public houses, and being a damned good-looking fellow, with an insinuating air of gentility, and some sort of education, you became sufficiently well received to acquire, in a short time, the manner

and tone of a——what shall I say,—a gentleman, and the taste to like suitable associates. This is my case too! Despite our labours for the public weal, the ungrateful dogs see that we are above them; a single envious breast is sufficient to give us to the hangman; we have agreed that we are in danger, we have agreed to make an honourable retreat! we cannot do so without money; you know the vulgar distich among our set. Nothing can be truer—

"Hanging is 'nation
More nice than starvation!"

You will not carry off some of the common stock, though I think you justly might, considering how much you have put into it. What, then, shall we do? Work we cannot! Beg we will not! And, between you and me, we are cursedly extravagant! What remains but marriage?"

"It is true!" said Clifford, with a half sigh.

"You may well sigh, my good fellow: marriage is a luck-draw proceeding at best; but there is no resource: and now, when you have got a liking to a young lady who is as rich as a she-Cromwell, and so gilded the pill as bright as a lord mayor's coach, what the devil have you to do with scruples?"

Clifford made no answer, and there was a long pause; perhaps he would not have spoken so frankly as he had done, if the wine had not opened his heart.

"How proud!" renewed Tomlinson. "the good old matron at Thomas Court will be if you marry a lady! You have not seen her lately?"

"Not for years," answered our hero. "Poor old soul! I believe that she is well in health, and I take care that she should not be poor in pocket."

"But why not visit her? Perhaps, like all good men, especially of a liberal turn of mind, you are ashamed of old friends, eh?"

"My good fellow is that like me? Why, you know the beast of our set look askant on me for not keeping up my dignity, robbing only in company with well-dressed gentlemen, and swindling under the name of a lord's nephew; no, my reasons are these:—first, you must know, that the old dame had set her heart on my turning out an honest man."

"And so you have!" interrupted Augustus; "honest to your party: what more would you have from either prig or politician?"

"I believe," continued Clifford, not heeding the interruption, "that my poor mother, before she died, desired that I might be reared honestly; and, strange as it may seem to you, Dame Lookins is a conscientious woman in her own way—it is not her fault if I have turned out as I have done. Now I know well that it would grieve her to the quick to see me what I am. Secondly, my friend, under my new names, various as they are,—Jackson and Howard, Russell and Pigwiggin, Villiers and Gotobed, Cavendish and Solomons,—you may well suppose that the good persons in the neighbourhood of Thames Court have no suspicion that the adventurous and accomplished ruffler, at present captain of this district, under the new appellation of Lovett, is in reality no other than the obscure and surnameless Paul of the Mug. Now you and I, Augustus, have read human nature, though in the *black letter*; and I know well that were I to make my appearance in Thames Court, and were the old lady—(as she certainly would, not from unkindness, but insobriety, not that she loves me less, but heavy wet more)—to divulge the secret of that appearance——"

"You know well," interrupted the vivacious Tomlinson, "that the identity of your former meanness with your present greatness would be easily traced: the envy and jealousy of

your early friends aroused; a hint of your whereabouts and your address given to the police, and yourself grabbed, with a slight possibility of a hempen consummation."

"You conceive me exactly!" answered Clifford: "the fact is, that I have observed in nine cases out of ten our bravest fellows have been taken off by the treachery of some early sweetheart or the envy of some boyish friend. My destiny is not yet fixed; I am worthy of better things than a ride in the cart with a nosegay in my hand; and though I care not much about death in itself, I am resolved, if possible, not to die a highwayman: hence my caution, and that prudential care for secrecy and safe asylums, which men, less wise than you, have so often thought an unnatural contrast to my conduct on the road."

"Fools!" said the philosophical Tomlinson; "what has the bravery of a warrior to do with his insuring his house from fire?"

"However," said Clifford, "I send my good nurse a fine gift every now and then to assure her of my safety; and thus, notwithstanding my absence, I shew my affection by my *presents*;—excuse a pun."

"And have you never been detected by any of your quondam associates?"

"Never!—remember in what a much more elevated sphere of life I have been thrown; and who could recognise the scamp Paul with a fustian jacket in gentleman Paul with a laced waistcoat? Besides, I have diligently avoided every place where I was likely to encounter those who saw me in childhood. You know how little I frequent flash houses, and how scrupulous I am in admitting new confederates into our band; you and Pepper are the only two of my associates—(save my *protégé*, as you express it, who never deserts the cave)

—that possesses a knowledge of my identity with the lost Paul; and as ye have both taken that dread oath to silence, which to disobey, until, indeed, I be in the goal or on the gallows, is almost to be assassinated, I consider my secret is little likely to be broken, save with my own consent."

"True," said Augustus, nodding; "one more glass, and to bed, Mr. Chairman."

"I pledge you, my friend; our last glass shall be philanthropically quaffed:—'All fools, and may their money soon be parted!'"

"All fools!" cried Tomlinson, filling a bumper; "but I quarrel with the wisdom of your toast:—may fools be rich, and rogues will never be poor! I would make a better livelihood of a rich fool than a landed estate."

So saying, the contemplative and ever-sagacious Tomlinson tossed off his bumper; and the pair, having kindly rolled by pedal applications the body of Long Ned into a safe and quiet corner of the room, mounted the stairs, arm in arm, in search of somnambular accommodations.

CHAPTER XVII.

*"That contrast of the hardened and mature,
The calm brow brooding o'er the project dark,
With the clear loving heart, and spirit pure
Of youth—I love—yet, hating, love to mark!"*

H. PLANCHÉ.

On the forenoon of the day after the ball, the carriage of William Brandon, packed and prepared, was at the door of his abode at Bath; meanwhile, the lawyer was closeted with his brother. "My dear Joseph," said the baronet, "I do not leave you without being fully sensible of your kindness evinced to me, both in coming hither, contrary to your habits, and accompanying me every where, despite of your tastes."

"Nonsense! not, my dear William," said the kind-hearted squire, "for your delightful society is to me the most agreeable—and that is what I can say of very few people like you; for, for my own part, I generally find that pleasant men the most agreeable ones in the world!" And I think because, in particular—(very different, indeed, from your tribe you are!)—perfectly rational!"

"I have now," said Brandon, who with his usual nervous quickness of

action was walking with rapid strides to and fro the apartment, and scarcely noted his brother's compliment—"I have now another favour to request of you—Consider this house and these servants yours, for the next month or two at least. Don't interrupt me—it is no compliment—I speak for our family benefit." And then seating himself next to his brother's arm-chair, for a fit of the gout made the squire a close prisoner, Brandon unfolded to his brother his cherished scheme of marrying Lucy to Lord Mallevor. Notwithstanding the constancy of the earl's attentions to the heiress, the honest squire had never dreamt of their palpable object, and he was overpowered with surprise when he heard the lawyer's expectations.

"But, my dear brother," he began, "as great a match for my Lucy, the Lord Lieutenant of the County—"

"And what of that?" cried Brandon

proudly, and interrupting his brother: "is not the race of Brandon, which has matched its actions with royalty, far nobler than that of the upstart stock of Mauleverer?—What is there presumptuous in the hope that the descendant of the Earls of Suffolk should regild a faded name with some of the precious dust of the quondam silversmiths of London?—Besides," he continued, after a pause, "Lucy will be rich—very rich—and before two years my rank may possibly be of the same order as Mauleverer's!"

The squire stared; and Brandon, not giving him time to answer, resumed.—It is needless to detail the conversation; suffice it to say, that the artful harrister did not leave his brother till he had gained his point—till Joseph Brandon had promised to remain at Bath in possession of the house and establishment of his brother; to throw no impediment on the suit of Mauleverer; to cultivate society as before; and, above all, not to alarm Lucy, who evidently did not yet favour Mauleverer exclusively, by hinting to her the hopes and expectations of her uncle and father. Brandon, now taking leave of his brother, mounted to the drawing-room in search of Lucy. He found her leaning over the gilt cage of one of her feathered favourites, and speaking to the little inmate in that pretty and playful language in which all thoughts, innocent, yet fond, should be clothed. So beautiful did Lucy seem, as she was thus engaged in her girlish and caressing employment, and so utterly unlike one meet to be the instrument of ambitious designs, and the sacrifice of worldly calculations, that Brandon paused, suddenly smitten at heart, as he beheld her: he was not, however, slow in recovering himself; he approached. "Happy he," said the man of the world, "for whom caresses and words like these are reserved!"

Lucy turned. "It is ill!" she said,

pointing to the bird, which sat with its feathers stiff and erect, mute and heedless even of that voice which was as musical as its own.

"Poor prisoner!" said Brandon; "even gilt cages and sweet tones cannot compensate to thee for the loss of the air and the wild woods!"

"But," said Lucy, anxiously, "it is not confinement which makes it ill! If you think so, I will release it instantly."

"How long have you had it?" asked Brandon.

"For three years!" said Lucy.

"And is it your *chief* favourite?"

"Yes; it does not sing so prettily as the other—but it is far more sensible, and so affectionate."

"Can you release it then?" asked Brandon, smiling. "Would it not be better to see it die in your custody, than to let it live and to see it no more?"

"Oh, no, no!" said Lucy, eagerly; "when I love any one—any thing—I wish that to be happy, not me!"

As she said this, she took the bird from the cage; and bearing it to the open window, kissed it, and held it on her hand in the air. The poor bird turned a languid and sickly eye around it, as if the sight of the crowded houses and busy streets presented nothing familiar or inviting; and it was not till Lucy, with a tender courage, shook it gently from her, that it availed itself of the proffered liberty. It flew first to an opposite balcony; and then recovering from a short, and, as it were, surprised pause, took a brief circuit above the houses; and after disappearing for a few minutes, flew back, circled the window, and re-entering, settled once more on the fair form of its mistress and nestled into her bosom.

Lucy covered it with kisses. "You see it will not leave me!" said she.

"Who can?" said the uncle, warmly, charmed for the moment from every

thought, but that of kindness for the young and soft creature before him.

"What can't he repeat with a sigh, "but an old and weathered ascetic like myself! I must leave you indeed; and my carriage is at the door! Will my beautiful niece, amidst the gaieties that surround her, condescend now and then to remember the crippled master, and assure him by a line of her happiness and health? Though I rarely write any notes but those upon mine you, at least, may be sure of an answer. And tell me, Lucy, if there be in all this city one so foolish as to think that those idle gems, useful only as a vent for my pride in you, can add a single charm to a beauty above all ornament!"

So saying, Brandon produced a leather case, and touching a spring, the imperial flash of diamonds, which would have made glad many a patriotic heart, broke dazzlingly on Lucy's eyes.

"No thanks, Lucy," said Brandon, in answer to his niece's disclaiming and shrinking gratitude, "I do honour to myself, not you; and now adieu, you, my dear girl. Farewell! Should any occasion present itself in which you require an immediate adviser, at once kind and wise, I beseech you, my dearest Lucy, as a parting request, to have no scruples in consulting Lord Mauleverer. Besides his friendship for me, he is much interested in you, and you may consult him with the more safety and assurance; because (and the lawyer smiled) he is perhaps the only man in the world whom my Lucy could not make in love with her. His gallantry may appear ridiculous, but it is never akin to love. Promise me, that you will not hesitate in this!"

Lucy gave the promise readily, and Brandon continued in a careless tone—"I hear that you danced last night with a young gentleman whom no one knew, and whose companions

bore a very strange appearance. In a place like Bath, society is too mixed not to render the greatest caution in forming acquaintances absolutely necessary. You must pardon me, my dearest niece, if I remark that a young lady owes it not only to herself, but to her relations, to observe the most rigid circumspection of conduct. This is a wicked world, and the peach-like bloom of character is easily rubbed away. In those points Mauleverer can be of great use to you. His knowledge of character—his penetration into men—and his tact in manner—are unerring. Pray, be guided by him: whosoever he warns you against, you may be sure is unworthy of your acquaintance. God bless you! you *will* write to me often and frankly, dear Lucy, tell me all that happens to you—all that interests, nay, all that displeases."

Brandon then, who had seemingly disregarded the blushes with which, during his speech, Lucy's cheeks had been spread, folded his niece in his arms, and hurried, as if to hide his feelings, into his carriage. When the horses had turned the street, he directed the postillions to stop at Lord Mauleverer's. "Now," said he to himself, "if I can get this clever counsellor to second my schemes, and play according to my game, and not according to his own vanity, I shall have a knight of the garter for my nephew-in-law!"

Meanwhile Lucy, all in tears, for she loved her uncle greatly, ran down to the square to show him Brandon's magnificent present.

"Ah!" said the square, with a sigh, "few men were born with more good qualities, and great qualities—quite only that his chief desire was to get on in the world; for my part, I think no *virtue makes greater and more solid-hearted rogues*—then my brother William!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Why did she love him?"—Curious fool be still!

Is human love the growth of human will?

To her he might be gentleness!—Lord Byron.

In three weeks from the time of his arrival, Captain Clifford was the most admired man in Bath. It is true, the gentlemen, who have a quicker tact as to the respectability of their own sex than women, might have looked a little shy upon him, had he not himself especially shunned appearing intrusive, and indeed rather avoided the society of men than courted it; so that after he had fought a duel with a baronet (the son of a shoemaker), who called him *one* Clifford; and had exhibited a flea-bitten horse, allowed to be the finest in Bath, he rose insensibly into a certain degree of respect with the one sex as well as popularity with the other. But what always attracted and kept alive suspicion, was his intimacy with so peculiar and *dashing* a gentleman as Mr. Edward Pepper. People could get over a certain frankness in Clifford's address, but the most lenient were astounded by the swagger of Long Ned. Clifford, however, not insensible to the ridicule attached to his acquaintances, soon managed to pursue his occupations alone; nay, he took a lodging to himself, and left Long Ned and Augustus Tomlinson (the latter to operate as a check on the former) to the quiet enjoyment of the hairdresser's apartments. He himself attended all public gaieties; and his mien, and the appearance of wealth which he maintained, procured him access into several private circles, which pretended to be exclusive: as if people who had daughters ever could be exclusive! Many were the kind

looks, nor few the inviting letters, which he received; and if his sole object had been to marry an heiress, he would have found no difficulty in attaining it. But he devoted himself entirely to Lucy Brandon; and to win one glance from her, he would have renounced all the heiresses in the kingdom. Most fortunately for him, Mauleverer, whose health was easily deranged, had fallen ill the very day William Brandon left Bath; and his lordship was thus rendered unable to watch the movements of Lucy, and undermine, or totally prevent, the success of her lover. Miss Brandon, indeed, had at first, melted by the kindness of her uncle, and struck with the sense of his admonition (for she was no self-willed young lady, who was determined to be in love), received Captain Clifford's advances with a coldness which, from her manner the first evening they had met at Bath, occasioned him no less surprise than mortification. He retreated, and recoiled on the squire, who, patient and bold, as usual, was sequestered in his favourite corner. By accident, Clifford trod on the squire's gouty digital; and in apologising for the offence, was so struck by the old gentleman's good nature and peculiarity of expressing himself, that without knowing who he was, he entered into conversation with him. There was an off-hand sort of liveliness and candour, not to say wit, about Clifford, which always had a charm for the elderly, who generally like frankness above all the cardinal virtues; the squire was exceedingly

pleased with him. The acquaintance, since begun, was naturally continued without difficulty when Clifford ascertained who was his new friend; and next morning, meeting in the pump-room, the square asked Clifford to dinner. The *entrée* to the house thus gained, the rest was easy. Long before Moorwater recovered his health, the mischief effected by his rival was almost beyond redress; and the heart of the pure, the simple, the affectionate Larry Brandon, was more than half lost to the lawless and vagrant cavalier who officiates as the hero of this tale.

One morning Clifford and Augustus stretched out together. "Let us," said the latter, who was in a melancholy mood, "leave the busy streets, and indulge in a philosophical conversation on the nature of man, while we are enjoying a little fresh air in the country." Clifford assented to the proposal, and the pair slowly ascended the slope of the hills that surround the city of Blasud.

"There are certain moments," said Tomlinson, looking pensively down at his kneeysmoor garters, "when we are like the fox in the nursery rhyme. 'The fox had a wound, he could not tell where'—we feel extremely unhappy, and we cannot tell *why*'—a dark and sad melancholy grows over us—we shun the face of man—we wrap ourselves in our thoughts like all-worms—we moulder fig-leaves of dismal songs—*tears* come into our eyes—we recall all the misfortunes that have ever happened to us—we stamp in our gut, and bury our hands in our breast-pocket—we say 'what is life!—a stone to be shod into a horseshoe!' We pine for some congenial heart—and have an itching desire to talk prodigiously about ourselves—all other subjects seem weary, stale, and unprofitable—we feel as if a fly could knock us down, and are in a humour to fall in *love*, and make

a very sad piece of business of it. Yet with all this weakness we have, at these moments, a finer opinion of ourselves than we ever had before. We call our miseries the melancholy of a sublime soul—the yearnings of an indigestion we denominate yearnings after immortality—nay, sometimes 'a proof of the nature of the soul!' May I find some biographer who understands such sensations well, and may he style these melting emotions the offspring of the poetical character,* which, in reality, are the offspring of—a mutton-chop!"

"You jest pleasantly enough on your low spirits," said Clifford; "but I have a cause for mine."

"What then?" cried Tomlinson. "So much the easier is it to cure them. The mind can cure the evils that spring from the mind; it is only a fool, and a quack, and a driveller, when it professes to heal the evils that spring from the body:—*my* blue devils spring from the body—consequently, my mind, which, as you know, is a particularly wise mind, wrestles not against them. Tell me frankly," renewed Augustus, after a pause, "do you ever repent? Do you ever think, if you had been a shop-boy with a white apron about your middle, that you would have been a happier and a better member of society than you now are?"

* Vide Moore's *Life of Byron*. In which it is conclusively shown that, if a man first forty-eight hours, then six three others, and third Heaven knows how many bottles of phreatic, when he wakes the next morning, he sees himself placed as a demon by half the population of the country—if, in a word, he be broken in his health, (according to his habits) unfortunate in his affairs, unappreciated in his home—and if then he should be so extremely conscientious as to be first quarrelled and misanthropic, the low spirits and the melancholy are to be traced to his attachment to the above horrible circumstances—but God wot to the "poetical character!"

"Repent!" said Clifford, fiercely; and his answer opened more of his secret heart, its motives, its reasonings, and its peculiarities, than were often discernible. "Repent—that is the fildest word in our language. No,—the moment I repent, that moment I reform! Never can it seem to me an atonement for crime merely to regret it—my mind would lead me not to regret, but to repair!—Repent!—no, not yet. The older I grow, the more I see of men and of the callings of social life—the more I, an open knave, sicken at the glossed and covert dishonesties around. I acknowledge no allegiance to society. From my birth to this hour, I have received no single favour from its customs or its laws;—openly I war against it, and patiently will I meet its revenge. This may be crime; but it looks light in my eyes when I gaze around, and survey on all sides the masked traitors who acknowledge large debts to society,—who profess to obey its laws—adore its institutions—and, above all—oh, how righteously!—attack all those who attack it, and who yet lie, and cheat, and defraud, and speculate—publicly reaping all the comforts, privately filching all the profits. Repent!—of what? I come into the world friendless and poor—I find a body of laws hostile to the friendless and the poor! To those laws hostile to me, then, I acknowledge hostility in my turn. Between us are the conditions of war. Let them expose a weakness—I insist on my right to seize the advantage: let them defeat me, and I allow their right to destroy."*

"Passion," said Augustus coolly, "is the usual enemy of reason—in your case it is the friend!"

The pair had now gained the sum-

mit of a hill which commanded a view of the city below. Here Augustus, who was a little short-winded, paused to recover breath. As soon as he had done so, he pointed with his forefinger to the scene beneath, and said enthusiastically—"What a subject for contemplation!"

Clifford was about to reply, when suddenly the sound of laughter and voices was heard behind—"Let us fly!" cried Augustus; "on this day of spleen man delights me not—nor woman either."

"Stay!" said Clifford, in a trembling accent; for among those voices he recognised one which had already acquired over him an irresistible and bewitching power. Augustus sighed, and reluctantly remained motionless. Presently a winding in the road brought into view a party of pleasure, some on foot, some on horseback, others in the little vehicles which even at that day haunted watering places, and called themselves "Flies" or "Swallows."

But among the gay procession Clifford had only eyes for one! Walking with that elastic step which so rarely survives the first epoch of youth, by the side of the heavy chair in which her father was drawn, the fair beauty of Lucy Brandon threw, at least in the eyes of her lover, a magic and a lustre over the whole group. He stood for a moment, stilling the heart that leaped at her bright looks and the gladness of her innocent laugh; and then recovering himself, he walked slowly, and with a certain consciousness of the effect of his own singularly handsome person, towards the party. The good squire received him with his usual kindness, and informed him, according to that *lucidus ordo* which he so especially favoured, of the whole particulars of their excursion. There was something worthy of an artist's sketch in the scene at that moment—the old

* The author need not, he hopes, observe, that these sentiments are Mr. Paul Clifford's—not his.

equine to his chair, with his benevolent face turned towards Clifford, and his hands resting on his knees—Clifford himself leaning down his stately head to hear the details of the father;—the beautiful daughter on the other side of the chair, her laugh suddenly stifled, her gaze immensely more composed, and blush shading blush over the smooth and peach-like loveliness of her cheek;—the party, of all sizes, ages, and attire, affording ample scope for the caricaturist; and the penitive figure of Augustus Tomlinson, who, by the by, was exceedingly like *himself*, standing apart from the rest, on the brow of the hill where Clifford had left him, and musing on the costly possession, with one hand hid in his waistcoat, and the other caressing his chin, which slowly and pendulously with the rest of his head would up and down.

As the party approached the brow of the hill, the view of the city below was so striking, that there was a general pause for the purpose of survey. One young lady, in particular, drew forth her pocket, and began sketching, while her mamma looked discomfitedly on, and abstractedly devoured a sandwich. It was at this time, in the general pause, that Clifford and Lucy found themselves—*Howson knows how*—next to each other, and at a sufficient distance from the square and the rest of the party to feel, in some measure, alone. There was a silence in both which neither dared to break; when Lucy, after looking at and trying with a duster that she had brought from the glass which the party had been to see, accidentally dropped it; and Clifford and herself stooping at the same moment to recover it, their hands met. Instantly Clifford held out the left fingers in his own; his eyes, that momentary been, as spell-bound and arrested, there, that he even then did not ask beneath his gown his

lips moved, but many and vehement emotions so suffocated his voice that no sound escaped them. But all the heart was in the eyes of each; that moment fixed their destinies. Henceforth there was an era from which they dated a new existence; a nucleus around which their thoughts, their remembrances, and their passions, clung. The great gulf was passed; they stood on the same shore; and felt, that though still apart and disunited, on that shore was no living creature but themselves! Meanwhile, Augustus Tomlinson, on finding himself surrounded by persons eager to gaze and to listen, broke from his moodiness and reserve. Looking full at his next neighbour, and flourishing his right hand in the air, till he suffered it to rest in the direction of the houses and chimneys below, he repeated that moral exclamation which had been wasted on Clifford, with a more solemn and a less passionate gravity than before—

"What a subject, ma'am, for contemplation!"

"Very sensibly said, indeed, sir," said the lady addressed, who was rather of a serious turn.

"I never," resumed Augustus in a louder key, and looking round for auditors,—"I never see a great town from the top of a hill, without thinking of an apothecary's shop!"

"Lord, sir!" said the lady. Tomlinson's end was gained;—struck with the quaintness of the notion, a little crowd gathered instantly around him, to hear it further developed.

"Of an apothecary's shop, ma'am?" repeated Tomlinson. "There lie your simples, and your purges, and your cathartics, and your poisons; all things to heal, and to strengthen, and to destroy. There are drugs enough in that collection to save you, to cure you all; but none of you know how to use them, nor what medicines to ask for, nor what potions to take;

so that the greater part of you swallow a wrong dose, and die of the remedy!"

"But if the town be the apothecary's shop, what, in the plan of your idea, stands for the apothecary?" asked an old gentleman, who perceived at what Tomlinson was driving.

"The apothecary, sir," answered Augustus, stealing his notion from Clifford, and sinking his voice, lest the true proprietor should overhear him—Clifford was otherwise employed—

"The apothecary, sir, is the LAW! It is the law that stands behind the counter, and dispenses to each man the dose he should take. To the poor, it gives bad drugs gratuitously; to the rich, pills to stimulate the appetite: to the latter, premiums for luxury; to the former, only speedy refuges from life! Alas! either your apothecary is but an ignorant quack, or his science itself is but in its cradle. He blunders as much as you would do if left to your own selection. Those who have recourse to him seldom speak gratefully of his skill. He relieves you, it is true—but of your money, not your malady; and the only branch of his profession in which he is an adept, is that which enables him to *bleed* you!—O Mankind!" continued Augustus, "what noble creatures you ought to be! You have keys to all sciences, all arts, all mysteries, but one! You have not a notion how you ought to be governed!—you cannot frame a tolerable law for the life and soul of you! You make yourselves as uncomfortable as you can by all sorts of galling and vexatious institutions, and you throw the blame upon 'Fate.' You lay down rules it is impossible to comprehend, much less to obey; and you call each other monsters, because you cannot conquer the impossibility! You invent all sorts of vices, under pretence of making laws for preserving virtue; and the anomalous artificialities of conduct yourselves pro-

duce, you say you are born with;—you make a mischief by the perversest art you can think of, and you call it with a sigh, 'Human Nature.' With a host of good dispositions struggling at your breasts, you insist upon libelling the Almighty, and declaring that He meant you to be wicked. Nay, you even call the man mischievous and seditious who begs and implores you to be one jot better than you are.—O Mankind! you are like a nosegay bought at Covent Garden. The flowers are lovely, the scent delicious;—mark that glorious hue! contemplate that bursting petal!—how beautiful, how redolent of health, of nature, of the dew and breath and blessing of Heaven, are you all! But as for the dirty piece of string that ties you together, one would think you had picked it out of the kennel!"

So saying, Tomlinson turned on his heel, broke away from the crowd, and solemnly descended the hill. The party of pleasure slowly followed; and Clifford, receiving an invitation from the squire to partake of his family dinner, walked by the side of Lucy, and felt as if his spirit were drunk with the airs of Eden.

A brother squire, who, among the gaieties of Bath, was almost as forlorn as Joseph Brandon himself, partook of the Lord of Warlock's hospitality. When the three gentlemen adjourned to the drawing-room, the two elder sat down to a game at backgammon, and Clifford was left to the undisturbed enjoyment of Lucy's conversation. She was sitting by the window when Clifford joined her. On the table by her side were scattered books, the charm of which (they were chiefly poetry) she had only of late learned to discover; *there* also were strewn various little masterpieces of female ingenuity, in which the fairy fingers of Lucy Brandon were especially formed to excel. The shades of evening were rapidly darkening over the

empty streets; and in the sky, which was blueless and transparently clear, the stars came gradually out one by one until,

"As water does a sponge, so their soft light
Filled the void, bottom, universal air."

Beautiful Evening! if we, as well as Augustine Tomlinson, may indulge in an apostrophe—Beautiful Evening! For these all poets have had a song, and surrounded them with rills, and waterfalls, and dews, and flowers, and sleep, and hate, and melancholy, and odds; yet we must confess that to us, who in this very sentimental age are a bustling, worldly, hard-hearted people, passing our neighbours, and thinking of the main chance;—to us, then art never so charming, as when we meet thee walking in thy grey hood, through the sleeping streets, and among the dying sounds of a city. We love to feel the stillness, where all, two hours back, was clamour. We love to see the dingy abodes, of Trade and Luxury, those restless patricians of earth's constant fever contracted and unspoiled by a heaven full of purity, and quietness, and peace. We love to fill our thought with speculations on man,—even though the man be the madman,—rather than with inanimate objects—hills and streams—things to dream about, not to meditate on. Man is the subject of far nobler contemplation, of far more glowing hope, of a far purer and loftier vein of sentiment, than all the "floods and fells" in the universe;—and that, sweet Evening! is one reason why we like that the sweetest and tender thoughts that exist within us, should be rather surrounded by the labours and toils, of our species, than by sleep, and hate, and melancholy, and odds. But whether, most blessed Evening! thou delightest us in the country or in the town, thou equally disposesst us to make and to feel love!—thou

art the cause of more marriages, and more divorces, than any other time in the twenty-four hours. Eyes, that were common eyes to us before, touched by thy enchanting and magic shadows, become inspired, and preach to us of heaven. A softness settles on features that were harsh to us while the sun shone; a mellow "light of love" reposes on the complexion, which by day we would have steeped "full fathom five" in a sea of Mrs. Goodland's lotion.—What, then, thou modest hypocrite! to those who *already* and deeply love—what, then, of danger and of paradise dost thou bring?

Silent, and stilling the breath which heaved in both quick and fitfully, Lucy and Clifford sat together. The streets were utterly deserted, and the loneliness, as they looked below, made them feel the more intensely not only the emotions which swelled within them, but the undefined and electric sympathy which, in uniting them, divided them from the world. The quiet around was broken by a distant strain of rude music; and as it came nearer, two forms of no poetical order grew visible; the one was a poor blind man, who was drawing from his flute tones in which the melancholy beauty of the air compensated for any deficiency (the deficiency was but slight) in the execution. A woman much younger than the musician, and with something of beauty in her countenance, accompanied him, holding a tattered hat, and looking wistfully up at the windows of the silent street. We add two forms— we did the injustice of forgetfulness to another—a rugged and simple friend, it is true, but one that both minimalist and wife had many and moving reasons to love. This was a little very tender, with dark piercing eyes, that glanced quickly and sagaciously in all quarters from beneath the shaggy covert that surrounded

them; slowly the animal moved onward, pulling gently against the string by which he was held, and by which he guided his master. Once his fidelity was tempted, another dog invited him to play; the poor terrier looked anxiously and doubtfully round, and then uttering a low growl of denial, pursued

“The noiseless tenour of his way.”

The little procession stopped beneath the window where Lucy and Clifford sat; for the quick eye of the woman had perceived them, and she laid her hand on the blind man's arm, and whispered him. He took the hint, and changed his air into one of love. Clifford glanced at Lucy—her cheek was dyed in blushes. The air was over,—another succeeded—it was of the same kind; a third—the burthen was still unaltered; and then Clifford threw into the street a piece of money, and the dog wagged his abridged and dwarfed tail, and darting forward, picked it up in his mouth; and the woman (she had a kind face) patted the officious friend, even before she thanked the donor, and then she dropped the money with a cheering word or two into the blind man's pocket, and the three wanderers moved slowly on. Presently they came to a place where the street had been mended, and the stones lay scattered about. Here the woman no longer trusted to the dog's guidance, but anxiously hastened to the musician, and led him with evident tenderness and minute watchfulness over the rugged way. When they had passed the danger, the man stopped; and before he released the hand which had guided him, he pressed it gratefully, and then both the husband and the wife stooped down and caressed the dog. This little scene—one of those rough copies of the loveliness of human affections, of which so many are scattered about

the highways of the world—both the lovers had involuntarily watched; and now as they withdrew their eyes—those eyes settled on each other—Lucy's swam in tears.

“To be loved and tended by the one I love,” said Clifford, in a low voice, “I would walk blind and bare foot over the whole earth!”

Lucy sighed very gently; and placing her pretty hands (the one clasped over the other) upon her knee, looked down wistfully on them, but made no answer. Clifford drew his chair nearer, and gazed on her as she sat; the long dark eyelash drooping over her eyes, and contrasting the ivory lids; her delicate profile half turned from him, and borrowing a more touching beauty from the soft light that dwelt upon it; and her full yet still scarcely developed bosom heaving at thoughts which she did not analyse, but was content to feel at once vague and delicious: he gazed and his lips trembled—he longed to speak—he longed to say but those words which convey what volumes have endeavoured to express, and have only weakened by detail—“*I love.*” How he resisted the yearnings of his heart, we know not—but he did resist: and Lucy, after a confused and embarrassed pause, took up one of the poems on the table, and asked him some questions about a particular passage in an old ballad which he had once pointed to her notice. The passage related to a border chief, one of the Armstrongs of old, who, having been seized by the English and condemned to death, vented his last feelings in a passionate address to his own home—his rude tower—and his newly wedded bride. “Do you believe,” said Lucy, as their conversation began to flow, “that one so lawless and eager for bloodshed and strife, as this robber is described to be, could be so capable of soft affections?”

"I do," said Clifford: "because he was not sensible that he was as criminal as you esteem him. If a man cherishes the idea that his actions are not evil, he will retain at his heart all its better and gentler sensations as much as if he had never sinned. The savage murders his enemy, and when he returns home is not the less devoted to his friend, or the less anxious for his children. To harden and embitter the kindly dispositions, we must not only indulge in guilt, but feel that we are guilty. Oh! many that the world load with their approbation are capable of acts—nay, have committed acts, which in others the world would reverence and adore. Would you know whether a man's heart be shut to the power of love; ask what he is—not to his foes, but to his friends? Crime, too," continued Clifford, speaking fast and vehemently, while his eyes flashed and the dark blood rushed to his cheek—"Crime—what is crime? Men embody their worst prejudices, their most evil passions, in a heterogeneous and contradictory code, and whatever breaks this code they term a crime. When they make no distinction in the penalty—that is to say, in the estimation—awarded both to murder and to a petty theft imposed on the weak will by famine, we ask nothing else to convince us that they are ignorant of the very nature of guilt, and that they make up in ferocity for the want of wisdom."

Lucy looked in alarm at the animated and fiery countenance of the speaker. Clifford recovered himself after a moment's pause, and rose from his seat with the gay and frank laugh which made one of his peculiar characteristics. "There is a singularity in politics, Miss Brandon," said he, "which I dare say you have often observed, viz. that those who are least important, are always most noisy; and that the chief people who lose

their temper, are those who have nothing to gain in return."

As Clifford spoke, the doors were thrown open, and some visitors to Miss Brandon were announced. The good spouse was still immersed in the vicissitudes of his game, and the sole task of receiving and entertaining "the company," as the chambermaids have it, fell, as usual, upon Lucy. Fortunately for her, Clifford was one of those rare persons who possess eminently the talents of society. There was much in his gay and gallant temperament, accompanied as it was with sentiment and ardour, that resembled our *beau idéal* of those chevaliers, ordinarily peculiar to the Continent—heroes equally in the drawing room and the field. Observant, courteous, witty, and versed in the various accomplishments that combine (that most unfrequent of all unions!) vivacity with grace, he was especially formed for that brilliant world from which his circumstances tended to exclude him. Under different auspices, he might have been—*Pooh! We are running into a most pointless commonplace*—what might any man be under auspices different from those by which his life has been guided? Music soon succeeded to conversation, and Clifford's voice was of necessity put into requisition. Miss Brandon had just risen from the harpsichord, as he sat down to perform his part; and she stood by him with the rest of the group while he sung. Only twice his eye stole to that spot which her breath and form made sacred to him; once when he began, and once when he concluded his song. Perhaps the recollection of their conversation inspired him; certainly it dealt upon his mind at the moment—threw a richer flush over his brow, and infused a more meaning and heartfelt softness into his tone.

STANZA8.

* When I leave thee, oh! ask not the world
 what that heart
 Which adores thee to others may be!
 I know that I go when from thee I depart.
 But my guilt shall not light upon thee!

My life is a river which chooses a ray
 That hath deign'd to descend from above;
 Whatever the banks that overshadow its
 way.

It mirrors the light of thy love.

Though the waves may run high when the
 night wind awakes,

And hurries the stream to its fall;

Though broken and wild be the billows it
 makes,

Thine image still trembles on all!"

While this ominous love between Clifford and Lucy was thus finding fresh food in every interview and every opportunity, the unfortunate Mauleverer, firmly persuaded that his complaint was a relapse of what he termed the "Warlock dyspepsia," was waging dire war with the remains of the beef and pudding, which he tearfully assured his physicians "were lurking in his constitution." As Mauleverer, though complaisant—like most men of unmistakeable rank—to all his acquaintances, whatever might be their grade,—possessed but very few friends intimate enough to enter his sick chamber, and none of that few were at Bath, it will readily be perceived that he was in blissful ignorance of the growing fortunes of his rival; and to say the exact truth, illness, which makes a man's thoughts turn very much upon himself, banished many of the most tender ideas usually floating in his mind around the image of Lucy Brandon. His pill superseded his passion; and he felt that there are draughts in the world more powerful in their effects than those in the phials of Alciconia.* He very

often thought, it is true, how pleasant it would be for Lucy to smooth his pillow, and Lucy to prepare that mixture, but then Mauleverer had an excellent valet, who hoped to play the part enacted by Gil Blas towards the honest Licentiate; and to nurse a legacy while he was nursing his master. And the earl, who was tolerably good-tempered, was forced to confess that it would be scarcely possible for any one "to know his ways better than Smoothson." Thus, during his illness, the fair form of his intended bride little troubled the peace of the noble adorer. And it was not till he found himself able to eat three good dinners consecutively, with a tolerable appetite, that Mauleverer recollected that he was violently in love. As soon as this idea was fully reinstated in his memory, and he had been permitted by his doctor to allow himself "a little cheerful society," Mauleverer resolved to go to the rooms for an hour or two.

It may be observed that most great personages have some favourite place, some cherished Balm, at which they love to throw off their state, and to play the amiable instead of the splendid; and Bath at that time, from its gaiety, its ease, the variety of character to be found in its haunts, and the obliging manner in which such characters exposed themselves to ridicule, was exactly the place calculated to please a man like Mauleverer, who loved at once to be admired and to satirise. He was therefore an idolised person at the city of Bladud; and as he entered the rooms he was surrounded by a whole band of imitators and sycophants, delighted to find his lordship looking so much better and declaring himself so convalescent. As soon as the earl had bowed and smiled and shaken hands sufficiently to sustain his reputation, he muttered towards the dancers in search of Lucy. He found her not only exactly in the

* See Marmontel's pretty tale of *Les Quatre Faisons*.

same spot in which he had last beheld her, but dancing with exactly the same partner who had before provoked all the gallant gentleman's jealousy and wrath. Mauleverer, though not by any means adduced to preparing his compliments beforehand, had just been making a delicate speech for Lucy, but no sooner did the person of her partner flash on him than the whole fancy vanished at once from his recollection. He felt himself grow pale; and when Lucy turned, and seeing him near, addressed him in the anxious and soft tone which she thought due to her uncle's friend on his recovery, Mauleverer bowed, confused and silent, and that green-eyed passion, which could have convulsed the soul of a true lover, altering a little the course of its fury, ultimately disturbed the manner of the courtier.

Retreating to an obscure part of the room, where he could see all without being conspicuous, Mauleverer now employed himself in watching the motions and looks of the young pair. He was naturally a penetrating and quick observer, and in this instance jealousy sharpened his talents; he was enough to convince him that Lucy was already attached to Clifford; and being, by that conviction, fully persuaded that Lucy was necessary to his own happiness, he resolved to lose not a moment in banishing Captain Clifford from her presence, or at least, in converting such inquiries into that gentleman's relatives, rank, and respectability, as would, he hoped, render such banishment a necessary consequence of the research.

Frighted with this determination, Mauleverer repaired at once to the retreat of the squire, and engaging him in conversation, bluntly asked him, "What the deuce Miss Brandon was dancing with?"

The squire, a little piqued at this *interrogatoire*, replied by a long sigh on Paul; and Mauleverer, after hear-

ing it throughout with the blindest smile imaginable, told the squire, very politely, that he was sure Mr. Brandon's good nature had misled him. "Clifford?" said he, repeating the name.—"Clifford! It is one of those names which are particularly selected by persons nobody knows; first, because the name is good, and, secondly, because it is common. My long and dear friendship with your brother makes me feel peculiarly anxious on any point relative to his niece; and, indeed, my dear William, overrating, perhaps, my knowledge of the world, and my influence in society,—but not my affection for him,—besought me to assume the liberty of esteeming myself a friend, nay, even a relation of yours and Miss Brandon's; so that I trust you do not consider my caution impertinent."

The flattered squire assured him that he was particularly honoured, so far from deeming his lordship—which never could be the case with people so distinguished as *his lordship was, especially*—*impertinent*.

Lord Mauleverer, encouraged by this speech, artfully renewed, and succeeded, if not in convincing the squire that the handsome captain was a suspicious character, at least in persuading him that common prudence required that he should find out exactly who the handsome captain was, especially as he was in the habit of dining with the squire thrice a week, and dancing with Lucy every night.

"See," said Mauleverer, "he approaches you now: I will retreat to the chair by the fireplace, and you shall cross-examine him—I have no doubt you will do it with the utmost delicacy."

So saying, Mauleverer took possession of a seat where he was not absolutely beyond hearing slightly deaf as he was of the ensuing colloquy, though the position of his seat screened him from sight. Mauleverer

was esteemed a man of the most punctilious honour in private life, and he would not have been seen in the act of listening to other people's conversation for the world.

Heaving with an air and resettling himself as Clifford approached, the squire thus skilfully commenced the attack: "Ah, ha! my good Captain Clifford, and how do you do? I saw you—and I am *very glad, my friend, as every one else is, to see you*—at a distance. And where have you left my daughter?"

"Miss Brandon is dancing with Mr. Muskwel, sir," answered Clifford.

"Oh! she is!—Mr. Muskwel—humph!—Good family the Muskells—came from Primrose Hall. Pray, Captain,—not that I want to know for my own sake, for I am a strange, odd person, I believe, and I am thoroughly convinced—(some people are censorious, and others, thank God, are not!)—of your respectability,—what family do you come from? You won't think my—my caution impertinent?" added the shrewd old gentleman, borrowing that phrase which he thought so friendly in the mouth of Lord Mauleverer.

Clifford coloured for a moment, but replied with a quiet archness of look, "Family! oh, my dear sir, I come from an old family,—a very old family indeed."

"So I always thought; and in what part of the world?"

"Scotland, sir—all our family come from Scotland; viz. all who live long do—the rest die young."

"Ay, particular air does agree with particular constitutions. I, for instance, could not live in all countries; not—you take me—in the North!"

"Few honest men *can* live there," said Clifford, drily.

"And," resumed the squire, a little embarrassed by the nature of his task, and the cool assurance of his young friend—

"And pray, Captain Clifford, what regiment do you belong to?"

"Regiment! oh the Rifles!" answered Clifford. ("Deuce is in me," muttered he—"if I can resist a jest, though I break my neck over it.")

"A very gallant body of men!" said the squire.

"No doubt of that, sir!" rejoined Clifford.

"And do you think, Captain Clifford," renewed the squire, "that it is a good corps for getting on?"

"It is rather a bad one for getting off," muttered the Captain, and then aloud, "Why, we have not much interest at court, sir."

"Oh! but then there is a wider scope, as my brother the lawyer says—and no man knows better—for merit. I dare say you have seen many a man elevated from the ranks!"

"Nothing more common, sir, than such elevation; and so great is the virtue of our corps, that I have also known not a few willing to transfer the honour to their comrades."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed the squire, opening his eyes at such disinterested magnanimity.

"But," said Clifford, who began to believe he might carry the equivoque too far, and who thought, despite of his jesting, that it was possible to strike out a more agreeable vein of conversation—"but, sir, if you remember, you have not yet finished that youthful hunting adventure of yours, when the hounds lost at Burnham Copee."

"Oh, very true," cried the squire, quite forgetting his late suspicions; and forthwith he began a story that promised to be as long as the chase it recorded. So charmed was he when he had finished it, with the character of the gentleman who had listened to it so delightedly, that on rejoining Mauleverer, he told the earl, with an important air, that he had strictly examined the young captain, and that

he had fully convinced himself of the excellence of his family, as well as the soundness of his morals. Mauleverer listened with a countenance of polite indifference; he had heard but little of the conversation that had taken place between the pair, but on questioning the squire upon sundry particulars of Clifford's birth, parentage, and property, he found him exactly as ignorant as before. The courtier, however, seeing further expostulation was in vain, contented himself with patting the squire's shoulder, and saying, with a mysterious urbanity, "Ah, sir, you are too good."

With these words he turned on his heel, and, not yet despairing, sought the daughter. He found Miss Brandon, just released from dancing, and, with a kind of paternal gallantry, he offered his arm to parade the apartments. After some preliminary flourish and reference for the thousandth time to his friendship for William Brandon, the earl spoke to her about that "fine-looking young man, who called himself Captain Clifford."

Unfortunately for Mauleverer, he gave a little too unguarded, as his sentiment against the interference of Clifford warmed with his language, and he dropped in his anger one or two words of censure, which especially offended the delicacy of Miss Brandon.

"Take care how I encourage, my lord!" said Lucy, with glowing cheeks, repeating the words which had so affronted her. "I really must beg you—"

"You mean, dear Miss Brandon," interrupted Mauleverer, squeezing her hand with respectful tenderness, "that you must beg me to apologise for my inadvertent expression. I do most sincerely. If I had felt less interest in your happiness, believe me, I should have been more guarded in my language."

Miss Brandon bowed stiffly, and the courtier saw, with secret rage, that the country beauty was not easily appeased, even by an apology from Lord Mauleverer. "I have seen the time," thought he, "when young unmarried ladies would have deemed an *apology* from me an honour! They would have gone into hysterics at an *apology*!" Before he had time to make his peace, the squire joined them; and Lucy taking her father's arm, expressed her wish to return home. The squire was delighted at the proposition. It would have been but civil in Mauleverer to offer his assistance in those little attentions preparatory to female departure from balls. He hesitated for a moment—"It keeps one so long in those cursed thorough draughts," thought he, shivering. "Besides, it is just possible that I may not marry her, and it is no good risking a cold (above all, at the beginning of winter) for nothing!" Fraught with this prudential policy, Mauleverer then resigned Lucy to her father, and murmuring in her ear that "her displeasure made him the most wretched of men," concluded his adieu by a bow penitentially graceful.

About five minutes afterwards, he himself withdrew. As he was wrapping his corporeal treasure in his *vestedaire* of valdes, previous to immersing himself in his chair, he had the mortification of seeing Lucy, who with her father, from some cause or other, had been delayed in the hall, handed to the carriage by Captain Clifford. Had the earl watched more narrowly than in the anxious cares due to himself he was enabled to do, he would, to his consolation, have noted that Lucy gave her hand with an averted and cool air, and that Clifford's expressive features bore rather the aspect of mortification than triumph.

He did not, however, see more than

the action; and as he was borne homeward with his flambeaux and footmen preceding him, and the watchful Smoothson by the side of the little vehicle, he muttered his determination of writing by the very next post to Brandon, all his anger for Lucy, and all his jealousy of her evident lover.

While this doughty resolve was animating the great soul of Mauleverer, Lucy reached her own room, bolted the door, and throwing herself on her bed, burst into a long and bitter paroxysm of tears. So unusual were such visitors to her happy and buoyant temper, that there was something almost alarming in the earnestness and obstinacy with which she now wept.

"What!" said she, bitterly, "have I placed my affections upon a man of uncertain character! and is my infatuation so clear, that an acquaintance dare hint at its imprudence? And yet his manner—his tone! No, no, there can be no reason for shame in loving him!" And as she said this, her heart smote her for the coldness of her manner towards Clifford, on his taking leave of her for the evening. "Am I," she thought, weeping yet more vehemently than before—"am I so worldly, so base, as to feel altered towards him the moment I hear a syllable breathed against his name? Should I not, on the contrary, have clung to his image with a greater love, if he were attacked by others? But my father, my dear father, and my kind, prudent uncle, something is due to them; and they would break their hearts if I loved one whom they deemed unworthy. Why should I not summon courage, and tell him of the suspicions respecting him? One candid word would dispel them. Surely it would be but kind in me towards him, to give him an opportunity of disproving all false and dishonouring conjectures. And why this moment

when so often, by look and hint, if not by open avowal, he has declared that he loves me, and knows he must know—that he is not indifferent to me? Why does he never speak of his parents, his relations, his home?"

And Lucy, as she asked this question, drew from a bosom whose hue and shape might have rivalled hers who won Cymon to be wise,* a drawing which she herself had secretly made of her lover, and which, though inartificially and even rudely done, yet had caught the inspiration of memory, and breathed the very features and air that were stamped already ineffaceably upon a heart too holy for so sullied an idol. She gazed upon the portrait as if it could answer her question of the original; and as she looked, and looked, her tears slowly ceased, and her innocent countenance relapsed gradually into its usual and eloquent serenity. Never, perhaps, could Lucy's own portrait have been taken at a more favourable moment. The unconscious grace of her attitude; her dress loosened; the modest and youthful voluptuousness of her beauty; the tender cheek to which the virgin bloom, banished for awhile, was now all glowingly returning; the little white soft hand on which that cheek leaned, while the other contained the picture upon which her eyes fed; the half smile just conjured to her full, red, dewy lips, and gone the moment after, yet again restored; all made a picture of such enchanting loveliness, that we question whether Shakspeare himself could have fancied an earthly shape more meet to embody the vision of a Miranda or a Viola. The quiet and maiden neatness of the apartment gave effect to the charm; and there was a poetry even in the snowy furniture of the bed, the shutters partly unclosed and admitting a glimpse of

* See Dryden's poem of *Cymon and Iphigenia*.

the silver moon, and the solitary lamp just contrasting with the paler ray of the skies, and so throwing a mixed and softened light around the chamber.

She was yet gazing on the drawing, when a faint stream of music stole through the air beneath her window, and it gradually rose till the sound of a piano became distinct and clear, exciting work, not discharging, the moment stillness of the night. The incidents and romance of a former day, though at the time of our story extending were not quite dispelled; and nightly serenades under the eaves, and of a passing shad beauty were by no means of infrequent occurrence. But here, as the music floated upon her ear, blushed deeper and deeper, as if it had a dearer source to her heart than ordinary gallantry, and raising herself on one arm from her reclining position, she leaned forward to catch the sound with a greater and more absorbing certainty.

After a pause of some moments, a clear and sweet voice accompanied the instrument, and the words of the song were as follows:—

CLIFFORD'S SERENADE.

"There is a world where every night
My spirit meets and walks with thine;
And hopes—I dare not tell thee—light
Like stars of Love—that world of mine!

Sleep '—to the waking world my heart
Hath now, methinks, a stranger grown:
Ah, sleep! that I may feel thou art
Within one world that is my own."

As the music died away, Lucy sank back once more, and the drawing which she held was pressed (with cheeks glowing, though unseen, at the act) to her lips. And though the character of her lover was unclear, though she herself had come to no distinct resolution even to inform him of the rumours against his name, yet so easily restored was her trust in him, and so soothing the very thought of his vigilance and his love, that before an hour had passed, her eyes were closed in sleep; the drawing was laid, as a spell against grief, under her pillow; and in her dreams she murmured his name, and unconscious of reality and the future, smiled tenderly as she did so!

CHAPTER XIX.

Come, the plot thickens! and another fold
Of the warm cloak of mystery wraps us around.

• • • • •

And for their lives!

Behold the coal is on them!—"Tanner of Tyburn

We must not suppose that Clifford's manner and tone were towards Lucy Braden such as they seemed to others. Love refused every roughness; and that truth which nurtured tenderness is never barren of grace. Whatever the faults and peculiarities of Clifford's life, he had at heart many good and generous qualities. They were not often perceptible it is true—first

because he was of a gay and reckless turn; secondly, because he was not easily affected by any external circumstances; and thirdly, because he had the policy to affect among his associates only such qualities as were likely to give him influence with them. Still, however, his better genius broke out whenever any partiality presented itself. Though no "Coward," romantic

and unreal, an Ossianic shadow becoming more vast in proportion as it recedes from substance; though no grandly imagined lie to the fair proportions of human nature, but an erring man in a very prosaic and homely world; Clifford still mingled a certain generosity and chivalric spirit of enterprise even with the practices of his profession. Although the name of Lovett, by which he was chiefly known, was one peculiarly distinguished in the annals of the adventurous, it had never been coupled with rumours of cruelty or outrage; and it was often associated with anecdotes of courage, courtesy, good humour, or forbearance. He was one whom a real love was peculiarly calculated to soften and to redeem. The boldness, the candour, the unselfishness of his temper, were components of nature upon which affection invariably takes a strong and deep hold. Besides, Clifford was of an eager and aspiring turn; and the same temper and abilities which had in a very few years raised him in influence and popularity far above all the chivalric band with whom he was connected, when once inflamed and elevated by a higher passion, were likely to arouse his ambition from the level of his present pursuits, and reform him, ere too late, into a useful, nay, even an honourable member of society. We trust that the reader has already perceived that, despite his early circumstances, his manner and address were not such as to unfit him for a lady's love. The comparative refinement of his exterior is easy of explanation, for he possessed a natural and inborn gentility, a quick turn for observation, a ready sense both of the ridiculous and the graceful; and these are materials which are soon and lightly wrought from coarseness into polish. He had been thrown, too, among the leaders and heroes of his band; many not absolutely low in birth, nor de-

based in habit. He had associated with the Barringtons of the day: gentlemen who were admired at Ranelagh, and made speeches worthy of Cicero when they were summoned to trial. He had played his part in public places; and, as Tomlinson was wont to say after his classic fashion, "the triumphs accomplished in the field had been planned in the ball-room." In short, he was one of those accomplished and elegant highwaymen of whom we yet read wonders, and by whom it would have been delightful to have been robbed: and the aptness of intellect which grew into wit with his friends, softened into sentiment with his mistress. There is something, too, in beauty (and Clifford's person, as we have before said, was possessed of even uncommon attractions) which lifts a beggar into nobility; and there was a distinction in his gait and look which supplied the air of rank, and the tone of courts. Men, indeed, skilled like Mauleverer in the subtleties of manner, might perhaps have easily detected in him the want of that indescribable essence possessed only by persons reared in good society; but that want being shared by so many persons of indisputable birth and fortune, conveyed no particular reproach. To Lucy, indeed, brought up in seclusion, and seeing at Warlock none calculated to refine her taste in the fashion of an air or phrase to a very fastidious standard of perfection, this want was perfectly imperceptible: she remarked in her lover only a figure everywhere unequalled—an eye always eloquent with admiration—a step from which grace could never be divorced—a voice that spoke in a silver key, and uttered flatteries delicate in thought and poetical in word:—even a certain originality of mind, remark, and character, occasionally approaching to the *bizarre*, yet sometimes also to the elevated, possessed a charm for the imagination of a young and not

nonthrusting female, and contrasted favourably rather than the reverse, with the dull insipidity of those she ordinarily saw. Nor are we sure that the mystery thrown about him, irksome as it was to her and discreditable as it appeared to others, was altogether methodical in increasing her love for the adventurer; and thus Fate, which transmutates in her magic crucible all opposing metals into that one which she is fabled to produce, swelled the wealth of an ill-placed and odious passion by the very circumstances which should have counteracted and destroyed it.

We are willing, by what we have said, not to defend Clifford, but to redeem Lucy in the opinion of our readers for loving so unwisely; and when they remember her youth, her education, her privation of a mother, of all female friendship, even of the vigilant and unrelaxing care of some protector of the opposite sex, we do not think that what was so natural will be undervalued by any inexorable.

Much overwake the morning after the ball, in better health than usual, and, consequently, more in love than ever. According to his resolution the night before, he sat down to write a long letter to William Brandon; it was amusing and witty as usual, but the wily nobleman succeeded, under the cover of wit, in conveying to Brandon's mind a serious apprehension that his cherished matrimonial project should altogether fail. The account of Lucy and of Captain Clifford, contained in the episode, instilled, indeed, a double portion of sourness into the professionally acrid mind of the lawyer; and as it so happened that he read the letter just before attending the court upon a case in which he was counsel to the crown, the witnesses on the opposite side of the question felt the full effects of the barrister's ill-humour.

The case was one in which the de-

fendant had been engaged in swindling transactions to a very large amount; and, amongst his agents and assistants, was a person of the very lowest orders—but who, seemingly enjoying large connexions, and possessing natural acuteness and address, appeared to have been of great use in receiving and disposing of such goods as were fraudulently obtained. As a witness against the latter person appeared a pawnbroker, who produced certain articles that had been pledged to him at different times by this humble agent. Now, Brandon, in examining the guilty go-between, became the more terribly severe, in proportion as the man evinced that semblance of unconscious stolidity which the lower orders can so ingeniously assume, and which is so peculiarly adapted to enrage and to baffle the gentlemen of the bar. At length, Brandon entirely subduing and quelling the stubborn hypocrisy of the culprit, the man turned towards him a look between wrath and beseechment, muttering—

"Aha!—if so be, Counsellor Brandon, you know vat I know, you would not go far to bully I so?"

"And pray, my good fellow, what is it that you know that should make me treat you as if I thought you an honest man?"

The witness had now relapsed into sullenness, and only answered by a sort of grunt. Brandon, who knew well how to sting a witness into commentiveness, continued his questioning, till the witness, reassured into anger, and, it may be, into indignation, said, in a low voice,—

"Hax Mr. Swoppen (the pawnbroker) what I sold him on the 15th of February, exactly twenty three yearn ago!"

Brandon started back, his lips grew white, he clenched his hands with a convulsive spasm; and while all his features seemed distorted with ar-

earnest, yet fearful intensity of expectation, he poured forth a volley of questions, so incoherent and so irrelevant, that he was immediately called to order by his learned brother on the opposite side. Nothing farther could be extracted from the witness. The pawnbroker was re-summoned: he appeared somewhat disconcerted by an appeal to his memory so far back as twenty-three years; but after taking some time to consider, during which the agitation of the usually cold and possessed Brandon was remarkable to all the court, he declared that he recollected no transaction whatsoever with the witness at that time. In vain were all Brandon's efforts to procure a more elucidatory answer. The pawnbroker was impenetrable, and the lawyer was compelled reluctantly to dismiss him. The moment the witness left the box, Brandon sunk into a gloomy abstraction—he seemed quite to forget the business and the duties of the court; and so negligently did he continue to conclude the case, so purposeless was the rest of his examination and cross-examination, that the cause was entirely marred, and a verdict "Not guilty" returned by the jury.

The moment he left the court, Brandon repaired to the pawnbroker's; and after a conversation with Mr. Swoppem, in which he satisfied that honest tradesman that his object was rather to reward than intimidate, Swoppem confessed that, twenty-three years ago, the witness had met him at a public-house in Devereux Court, in company with two other men, and sold him several articles in plate, ornaments, &c. The great bulk of these articles had, of course, long left the pawnbroker's abode; but he still thought a stray trinket or two—not of sufficient worth to be re-set or remodelled, nor of sufficient fashion to find a ready sale—lingered in his drawers. Eagerly, and with trembling

hands, did Brandon tow over the motley contents of the mahogany reservoirs which the pawnbroker now submitted to his scrutiny. Nothing on earth is so melancholy a prospect as a pawnbroker's drawer! Those little, quaint, valueless ornaments,—those true-lovers'-knots, those oval lockets, those battered rings, girdled by initials, or some brief inscription of regard or of grief,—what tales of past affections, hopes, and sorrows, do they not tell! But no sentiment of so general a sort ever saddened the hard mind of William Brandon, and now less than at any time could such reflections have occurred to him. Impatiently he threw on the table, one after another, the baubles once hoarded, perchance, with the tenderest respect, till, at length, his eyes sparkled, and with a nervous gripe he seized upon an old ring, which was inscribed with letters, and circled a heart containing hair. The inscription was simply, "W. B. to Julia." Strange and dark was the expression that settled on Brandon's face as he regarded this seemingly worthless trinket. After a moment's gaze, he uttered an inarticulate exclamation, and thrusting it into his pocket, renewed his search. He found one or two other trifles of a similar nature: one was an ill-done miniature set in silver, and bearing at the back sundry half-effaced letters, which Brandon construed at once (though no other eye could) into "Sir John Brandon, 1635, *Etat* 28;" the other was a seal stamped with the noble crest of the house of Brandon, 'A bull's head, ducally crowned and armed, Or.' As soon as Brandon had possessed himself of these treasures, and arrived at the conviction that the place held no more, he assured the conscientious Swoppem of his regard for that person's safety, rewarded him munificently, and went his way to Bow Street for a warrant against the

witness who had commended him to the postmaster. On his road thither, a new resolution occurred to him: "Why make all public?" he muttered to himself. "If it can be avoided? and it may be avoided!" He paused a moment, then retraced his way to the post-breakers, and, after a brief mandate to Mr. Sweggen, returned home. In the course of the same evening, the witness we refer to was brought to the lawyer's house by Mr. Sweggen, and there held a long and private conversation with Brandon: the result of this seemed a compact to their mutual satisfaction, for the man went away safe, with a heavy purse and a light heart, although sundry shades and misgivings did certainly over and under cross the latter, while Brandon, flung himself back in his seat, with the triumphant air of one who has accomplished some great mission, and his dark face betrayed in every feature a joyousness and hope, which were unfrequent guests, it must be owned, either to his countenance or his heart.

Supposed a man of business, however, was William Brandon, that he allowed not the event of that day to defer beyond the night his attention to his duties for the aggrandisement of his name and house. By daybreak the next morning he had written to Lord Mauleverer, to his brother, and to Lucy. To the last, his letter, couched in all the mystery of fineness, and the mystery of affectionate experience, was well calculated to occasion that mingled shame and seriousness which the wary lawyer rightly judged would be the most effectual enemy to an impetuous passion. "I have accidentally heard," he wrote, "from a friend of mine, just arrived from Bath, of the glowing attentions paid to you by a Captain Clifford; I will not, my dearest niece, wound you by repeating what also I heard of your manner in receiving them. I know the ill nature

and the envy of the world; and I do not for a moment imagine that my Lucy, of whom I am so justly proud, would countenance, from a petty coquetry, the advances of one whom she could never marry, or evince to any suitor partiality unknown to her relations, and certainly placed in a quarter which could never receive their approbation. I do not credit the reports of the idle, my dear niece; but if I discredit, you must not slight them. I call upon your prudence, your delicacy, your discretion, your sense of right, at once, and effectually, to put a stop to all impertinent rumours: dance with this young man no more; do not let him be of your party in any place of amusement, public or private; avoid even seeing him if you are able, and throw in your manner towards him that decided coldness which the world cannot mistake." Much more did the skilful uncle write, but all to the same purpose, and for the furtherance of the same design. His letter to his brother was no less artful. He told him at once that Lucy's preference of the suit of a handsome fortune-hunter was the public talk, and besought him to lose not a moment in quelling the rumour. "You may do so easily," he wrote, "by avoiding the young man; and should he be very importunate, return at once to Warlock; your daughter's welfare must be dearer to you than any thing."

To Mauleverer, Brandon replied by a letter which turned first on public matters, and then slid carefully into the subject of the earl's information.

Among the admonitions which he ventured to give Mauleverer, he dwelt, not without reason, on the want of tact displayed by the earl, in not manifesting that pomp and show which his station in life enabled him to do. "Remember," he urged, "you are not among your equals, by whom unnecessary parade begins to be

considered an ostentatious vulgarity. The surest method of dazzling our inferiors is by splendour—not by cost. All young persons—all women in particular, are caught by show, and enamoured of magnificence. Assume a greater state, and you will be more talked of; and notoriety wins a woman's heart more than beauty or youth. You have, forgive me, played the boy too long; a certain dignity becomes your manhood: women will not respect you if you suffer yourself to become 'stale and cheap to vulgar company.' You are like a man who has fifty advantages, and uses only one of them to gain his point, when you rely on your conversation and your manner, and throw away the resources of your wealth and your station. Any private gentleman may be amiable and witty; but any private gentleman cannot call to his aid the Aladdin's lamp possessed in England by a wealthy peer. Look to this, my dear lord; Lucy at heart is vain, or she is not a woman. Dazzle her, then,—dazzle! Love may be blind, but it must be made so by excess of light. You have a country-house within a few miles of Bath. Why not take up your abode there instead of in a paltry lodging in the town? Give sumptuous entertainments,—make it necessary for all the world to attend them,—exclude, of course, this Captain Clifford; you will then meet Lucy without a rival. At present, excepting only your title, you fight on a level ground with this adventurer, instead of an eminence from which you could in an instant sweep him away. Nay, he is stronger than you; he has the opportunities afforded by a partnership in balls where you cannot appear to advantage; he is, you say, in the first bloom of youth,—he is handsome. Reflect!—your destiny, so far as Lucy is concerned, is in your hands. I turn to other subjects," &c.

As Brandon re-read, ere he signed, this last letter, a bitter smile sat on his harsh, yet handsome features. "If," said he, mentally, "I can effect this object; if Manleverer does marry this girl, why so much the better that she has another, a fairer, and a more welcome lover. By the great principle of scorn within me, which has enabled me to sneer at what weaker minds adore, and make a foot-stool of that worldly honour which fools set up as a throne, it would be to me more sweet than fame—ay, or even than power—to see this fine-spun lord a gibe in the mouths of men,—a cuckold—a cuckold!" and as he said the last word Brandon laughed outright. "And he thinks, too," added he, "that he is sure of my fortune; otherwise, perhaps, he, the goldsmith's descendant, would not dignify our house with his proposals; but he may err there—he may err there;"—and finishing his soliloquy, Brandon finished also his letter by:—"Adieu, my dear lord, your most affectionate friend!"

It is not difficult to conjecture the effect produced upon Lucy by Brandon's letter: it made her wretched; she refused for days to go out; she shut herself up in her apartment, and consumed the time in tears and struggles with her own heart. Sometimes, what she conceived to be her duty conquered, and she resolved to forswear her lover; but the night undid the labour of the day: for at night, every night, the sound of her lover's voice, accompanied by music, melted away her resolution, and made her once more all tenderness and trust. The words, too, sung under her window, were especially suited to afflict her: they breathed a melancholy which touched her the more from its harmony with her own thoughts. One while they complained of absence, at another they hinted at neglect; but there was always in them a tone of

himself, not reproach they be-
speak a sense of unworthiness in the
house, and confessed that even the
house was a crime; and in proportion
as they owned the want of desert, did
Lacy more firmly cling to the belief
that her lover was deserving.

The old squire was greatly discon-
certed by his brother's letter. Though
impressed with the idea of self-conse-
quence, and the love of tolerably pure
blood, common to most country
squires, he was by no means ambitious
for his daughter. On the contrary,
the same feeling which at Warlock
had made him choose his companions
among the inferior gentry, made him
averse to the thought of a son-in-law
from the peerage. In spite of Man-
chester's good nature, the very ease of
the earl annoyed him, and he never
sat at home in his society. To Cliff-
ford he had a great liking; and having
convinced himself that there was
nothing to suspect in the young gen-
tlemen, he saw no earthly reason why
so agreeable a companion should not
be an agreeable son-in-law. "If he
be poor," thought the squire, "though
he does not seem so, Lacy is rich!"
And this reason appeared to him to
answer every objection. Nevertheless,
William Brandon possessed a remark-
able influence over the weaker mind of
his brother; and the squire, though
with great reluctance, resolved to adopt

his advice. He shut his doors against
Clifford, and when he met him in the
streets, instead of greeting him with
his wonted cordiality, he passed him
with a hasty "Good day, captain!"
which, after the first day or two,
merged into a distant bow. When-
ever very good-hearted people are
rude, and unjustly so, the rudeness is
in the extreme. The squire felt it
so irksome to be less familiar than
heretofore with Clifford, that his
only remaining desire was now to
drop him altogether; and to this
consummation of acquaintance the
gradually cooling salute appeared
rapidly approaching. Meanwhile, Cliff-
ford, unable to see Lacy, shunned
by her father, and obtaining in
answer to all inquiry rude looks
from the footman, whom nothing but
the most resolute command over his
muscles prevented him from knocking
down, began to feel, perhaps, for the
first time in his life, that an equivocal
character is at least no equivocal mis-
fortune. To add to his distress, "the
outings of his previous industry"—
we use the expression cherished by
the wise Tomlinson—waxed gradually
less and less, beneath the expenses of
Bath; and the mourning vices of
his two comrades began already to
reproach their chief for his inglorious
alliance, and to hint at the necessity
of a speedy exertion.

CHAPTER XX.

"*Wharham*. Look you there, now! Well, all Europe cannot show a knot of finer wits
and braver gentlemen."

Dorothy. Faith, they are pretty smart men."

BROADWELL'S SCOURGERS.

THE world of Bath was of a sudden
delighted by the intelligence that
Lord Manselver had gone to Beau-
valle (the beautiful seat possessed by
that nobleman in the neighbourhood
of Bath), with the intention of there

holding a series of sumptuous enter-
tainments.

The first persons to whom the gay
earl announced his "hospitable pur-
pose" were Mr. and Miss Brandon;
he called at their house, and declared

his resolution of not leaving it till Lucy (who was in her own room) consented to gratify him with an interview, and a promise to be the guest of his proposed festival. Lucy, teased by her father, descended to the drawing-room spiritless and pale; and the earl, struck by the alteration of her appearance, took her hand, and made his inquiries with so interested and feeling a semblance of kindness, as prepossessed the father, for the first time, in his favour, and touched even the daughter. So earnest, too, was his request that she would honour his festivities with her presence, and with so skilful a flattery was it conveyed, that the squire undertook to promise the favour in her name; and when the earl, declaring he was not contented with that promise from another, appealed to Lucy herself, her denial was soon melted into a positive, though a reluctant assent.

Delighted with his success, and more struck with Lucy's loveliness, refined as it was by her paleness, than he had ever been before, Mauleverer left the house, and calculated, with greater accuracy than he had hitherto done, the probable fortune Lucy would derive from her uncle.

No sooner were the cards issued for Lord Mauleverer's *fête*, than nothing else was talked of among the circles which, at Bath, people were pleased to term "the World."

But, in the interim, caps are making, and talk flowing, at Bath: and when it was found that Lord Mauleverer—the good-natured Lord Mauleverer;—the obliging Lord Mauleverer!—was really going to be exclusive, and out of a thousand acquaintances to select only eight hundred, it is amazing how his popularity deepened into respect. Now, then, came anxiety and triumph; she who was asked turned her back upon her who was not,—old friendships dissolved,—Independence wrote letters for a ticket,

—and, as England is the fairest country in the world, all the Mistresses Hodges and Smolges begged to take the liberty of bringing their youngest daughters.

Leaving the enviable Mauleverer—the godlike occasion of so much happiness and woe, triumph and dejection, ascend with us, O reader, into those elegant apartments over the hair-dresser's shop, tenanted by Mr. Edward Pepper and Mr. Augustus Tomlinson:—the time was that of evening: Captain Clifford had been dining with his two friends, the cloth was removed, and conversation was flowing over a table graced by two bottles of port, a bowl of punch for Mr. Pepper's especial discussion, two dishes of filberts, another of devilled biscuits, and a fourth of three Pomarian crudities, which nobody touched.

The hearth was swept clean, the fire burned high and clear, the curtains were let down, and the light excluded. Our three adventurers and their room seemed the picture of comfort. So thought Mr. Pepper; for, glancing round the chamber, and putting his feet upon the fender, he said,—

"Were my portrait to be taken, gentlemen, it is just as I am now that I would be drawn!"

"And," said Tomlinson, cracking his filberts—Tomlinson was fond of filberts—"were I to choose a home, it is in such a home as this that I would be always quartered."

"Ah! gentlemen," said Clifford, who had been for some time silent, "it is more than probable that both your wishes may be heard, and that ye may be drawn, quartered, and something else, too, in the very place of your *départ*!"

"Well!" said Tomlinson, smiling gently, "I am happy to hear you jest again, captain, though it be at our expense."

"Expense!" echoed Ned; "Ay!

there's the rub ! Why the deuce is to pay the expense of our dinner ?"

"And our dinner for the last week," added Tomlinson :—"this simply not looks auspicious, it certainly has one grand feature, strikingly resembling my pocket."

"Hugus !" signed Long Ned—tapping his waistcoat commodities motionless with a significant gesture, while the accomplished Tomlinson, who was fond of plaintive poetry, pointed to the desolate vacua, and exclaimed,—

"Even while fashion's brightest arts decay,
The heart depending axes if this be joy !"

"In truth, gentlemen," added he, solemnly depositing his nut-crackers on the table, and laying, as was his wont, when about to be humorous, his right finger on his sinister palm—"in such, gentlemen, affairs are growing serious with us, and it becomes necessary forthwith to devise some safe means of procuring a decent competence."

"I am dunned confoundedly," cried Ned.

"And," continued Tomlinson, "no person of delicacy likes to be subjected to the importunity of vulgar creditors; we must, therefore, raise money for the liquidation of our debts. Captain Lowett, or Clifford, whichever you be pleased, we call upon you to assist us in this pious and holy purpose."

Clifford turned his eyes first on one, and then on the other, but made no answer.

"Impudence," said Tomlinson, "let us each produce our stock in hand for my part, I am free to confess, for what chance is there in this poverty which our exertions are about to relieve—that I have only two guineas, four shillings, and threepence half penny !"

"And I," said Long Ned, taking a chair, procured from the chimney-piece, and emptying its contents in

his hand, "am in a still more pitiful condition. See, I have only three shillings and a bad guinea. I gave the guinea to the waiter at the White Hart, yesterday; the dog brought it back to me to-day, and I was forced to change it with my last shiner. Pray, take the thing, I bought it of a Jew for four shillings, and have lost one pound five by the bargain."

"Fortune frustrates our wisest schemes !" rejoined the moralising Augustus. "Captain, will you produce the scanty wrecks of your wealth ?"

Clifford, still silent, threw a purse on the table; Augustus carefully emptied it, and counted out five guineas: an expression of grave surprise settled on Tomlinson's contemplative brow, and extending the coins towards Clifford, he said in a melancholy tone,—

— "All your pretty ones ?
Did you say all ?"

A look from Clifford answered the interesting interrogatory.

"These, then," said Tomlinson, collecting in his hand the common wealth—"these, then, are all our remaining treasures !"—As he spoke, he jingled the coins mournfully in his palm, and gazing upon them with a parental air, exclaimed,—

"Alas ! remnants of their doom, the little victims play !"

"Oh, d— it !" said Ned, "no sentiment ! Let us come to business at once. To tell you the truth, I, for one, am tired of this heinous hunting, and a man may spend a fortune in the chase before he can win one."

"You deeper than, positively, of the whole you have courted so long," asked Tomlinson.

"Nonsense," rejoined Ned, whose address had been limited solely to the games of the gambling class, and who had imagined himself at one time, as he punningly expressed it

sure of a *leer* rib from *Cheapside*. "Utterly; she was very civil to me at first, but when I proposed, asked me, with a blush, for my 'references'—'References' said I; 'why, I want the place of your husband, my charmer, not your footman!'—The dame was inexorable, said she could not take me without a character, but hinted that I might be the lover instead of the bridegroom; and when I scorned the suggestion, and pressed for the parson, she told me point blank, with her unlucky city pronunciation, 'that she would never accompany me to the altar!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Tomlinson, laughing. "One can scarcely blame the good lady for that. Love rarely brooks such permanent ties. But have you no other lady in your eye?"

"Not for matrimony;—all roads but those to the church!"

While this dissolute pair were thus conversing, Clifford, leaning against the wainscot, listened to them with a sick and bitter feeling of degradation, which, till of late days, had been a stranger to his breast. He was at length aroused from his silence by Ned, who bending forward, and placing his hand upon Clifford's knee, said abruptly,—

"In short, captain, you must lead us once more to glory. We have still our horses, and I keep my mask in my pocket-book, together with my comb. Let us take the road to-morrow night, dash across the country towards Salisbury, and after a short visit in that neighbourhood to a band of old friends of mine—bold fellows, who would have stopped the devil himself when he was at work upon Stonehenge,—make a tour by Reading and Henley, and end by a plunge into London."

"You have spoken well, Ned!" said Tomlinson, approvingly. "Now, noble captain, your opinion?"

"Messieurs," answered Clifford, "I highly approve of your intended

excursion, and I only regret that I cannot be your companion."

"Not! and why!" cried Mr. Pepper, amazed.

"Because I have business here that renders it impossible; perhaps, before long, I may join you in London."

"Nay," said Tomlinson, "there is no necessity for our going to London, if you wish to remain here; nor need we at present recur to so desperate an expedient as the road—a little quiet business at Bath will answer our purpose; and for my part, as you well know, I love exerting my wits in some scheme more worthy of them than the highway;—a profession meet for a bully than a man of genius. Let us then, captain, plan a project of enrichment on the property of some credulous tradesman! why have recourse to rough measures, so long as we can find easy fools?"

Clifford shook his head. "I will own to you fairly," said he, "that I cannot at present take a share in your exploits: nay, as your chief, I must lay my positive commands on you to refrain from all exercise of your talents at Bath. Rob, if you please: the world is before you; but this city is sacred."

"Body o' me!" cried Ned, colouring, "but this is too good. I will not be dictated to in this manner."

"But, sir," answered Clifford, who had learned in his oligarchical profession the way to command, "but, sir, you shall; or if you mutiny, you leave our body, and then will the hangman have no petty chance of your own. Come! come! ingrate as you are, what would you be without me? How many times have I already saved that long carcass of thine from the rope, and now would you have the baseness to rebel? Out on you!"

Though Mr. Pepper was still wroth, he bit his lip in moody silence, and suffered not his passion to have its way: while Clifford rising, after a

short pause, continued: "Look you, Mr. Pepper, you know my commands; consider them peremptory. I wish you success, and plenty! Farewell, gentlemen!"

"Do you leave us already?" cried Tomlinson. "You are offended."

"Surely not!" answered Clifford, retreating to the door. "But an engagement elsewhere, you know!"

"Ay, I take you!" said Tomlinson, following Clifford out of the room, and shutting the door after him.

"Ay, I take you!" added he, in a whisper, as he arrested Clifford at the head of the stairs. "But tell me, how do you get on with the heiress?"

Smothering that sensation at his heart which made Clifford, reckless as he was, enraged and ashamed, whenever, through the lips of his comrades, there issued any allusion to Lucy Brandon, the chief replied, "I fear, Tomlinson, that I am already suspected by the old squire! All of a sudden, he avoids me, shuts his door against me; Miss Brandon goes nowhere; and even if she did, what could I expect from her after this sudden change in the father?"

Tomlinson looked blank and disconcerted. "But," said he, after a moment's silence, "why not put a good face on the matter? I walk up to the squire, and ask him the reason of his unkindness?"

"Why, look you, my friend; I am bold enough with all others, but this girl has made me as bashful as a maid in all that relates to herself. Nay, there are moments when I think I can conquer all selfish feeling, and rejoice for her sake that she has escaped me. Could I but see her once more—I could—yes! I feel—I feel I could—rejoice her for ever!"

"Humph!" said Tomlinson; "and what is to become of us? Really, my captain, your sense of duty should lead you to exert yourself; your friends starve before your eyes, while you are

shilly-shallying about your mistress. Have you no bowels for friendship?"

"A truce with this nonsense!" said Clifford, angrily.

"It is sense,—sober sense,—and sadness too," rejoined Tomlinson. "Ned is discontented, our debts are imperious. Suppose now,—just suppose,—that we take a moonlight flitting from Bath, will that tell well for you whom we leave behind? Yet this we must do, if you do not devise some method of refilling our purses. Either, then, consent to join us in a scheme meet for our wants, or pay our debts in this city, or fly with us to London, and dismiss all thoughts of that love which is so seldom friendly to the projects of ambition."

Notwithstanding the manner in which Tomlinson made this threefold proposition, Clifford could not but acknowledge the sense and justice contained in it; and a glance at the matter sufficed to show how ruinous to his character, and, therefore, to his hopes, would be the flight of his comrades and the clamour of their creditors.

"You speak well, Tomlinson," said he, hesitating; "and yet for the life of me I cannot aid you in any scheme which may di grace us by detection. Nothing can reconcile me to the apprehension of Miss Brandon's discovering who and what was her suitor."

"I feel for you," said Tomlinson, "but give me and Pepper at least permission to shift for ourselves; trust to my known prudence for finding some method to raise the wind without creating a dust: in other words—(this cursed Pepper makes one so vulgar)—of preying on the public without being discovered."

"I see no alternative," answered Clifford, reluctantly, "but, if possible, be quiet for the present; bear with me for a few days longer, give me only sufficient time once more to see

Miss Brandon, and I will engage to extricate you from your difficulties!"

"Spoken like yourself, frankly and nobly!" replied Tomlinson; "no one has a greater confidence in your genius, once exerted, than I have!"

So saying, the pair shook hands and parted. Tomlinson rejoined Mr. Pepper.

"Well, have you settled anything?" quoth the latter.

"Not exactly; and though Lovett has promised to exert himself in a few days, yet as the poor man is in love, and his genius under a cloud, I have little faith in his promises."

"And I have none!" said Pepper; "besides, time presses! A few days!—a few devils! We are certainly scented here, and I walk about like a barrel of beer at Christmas, under hourly apprehension of being *tapped*!"

"It is very strange," said the philosophic Augustus; "but I think there is an instinct in tradesmen by which they can tell a rogue at first sight; and I can get (dress I ever so well) no more credit with my laundress than my friends the Whigs can with the people."

"In short, then," said Ned, "we must recur at once to the road; and on the day after to-morrow there will be an excellent opportunity: the old earl with the hard name gives a breakfast, or feast, or some such mummary. I understand people will stay till after nightfall; let us watch our opportunity, we are famously mounted, and some carriage later than the general string may furnish us with all our hearts can desire!"

"Bravo!" cried Tomlinson, shaking Mr. Pepper heartily by the hand; "I give you joy of your ingenuity, and you may trust to me to make our peace afterwards with Lovett. Any enterprise that seems to him gallant he is always willing enough to forgive; and as he never practises any other branch of the profession than that of

the road,—(for which I confess that I think him foolish,)—he will be more ready to look over our exploits in that line than in any other more subtle but less heroic."

"Well, I leave it to you to propitiate the cove or not, as you please, and now that we have settled the main point, let us finish the lish!"

"And," added Augustus, taking a pack of cards from the chimney piece, "we can in the meanwhile have a quiet game at cribbage for shillings."

"Done!" cried Ned, clearing away the desert.

If the redoubted hearts of Mr. Edward Pepper, and that Ulysses of robbers, Augustus Tomlinson, beat high as the hours brought on Lord Mauleverer's *fête*, their leader was not without anxiety and expectation for the same event. He was uninvited, it is true, to the gay scene; but he had heard in public that Miss Brandon, recovered from her late illness, was certainly to be there; and Clifford, torn with suspense, and eager once more, even if for the last time, to see the only person who had ever pierced his soul with a keen sense of his errors, or crimes, resolved to risk all obstacles, and meet her at Mauleverer's.

"My life," said he, as he sat alone in his apartment, eyeing the falling embers of his still and lethargic fire, "may soon approach its termination; it is, indeed, out of the chances of things that I can long escape the doom of my condition; and when, as a last hope to raise myself from my desperate state into respectability and reform, I came hither, and meditated purchasing independence by marriage, I was blind to the cursed rascality of the action! Happy, after all, that my intentions were directed against one whom I so soon and so adoringly learned to love! Had I wooed one whom I loved less, I might not have scrupled to deceive her into marriage.

As it is!—well!—it is idle in me to think thus of my resolution, when I have not even the option to choose; when her father, perhaps, has already lifted the veil from my assumed dignities, and the daughter already strikes in horror from my name. Yet I will see her! I will look once more upon that angel face—I will hear from her own lips the confession of her scorn—I will see that bright eye flash hatred upon me, and I can then turn once more to my fatal career, and forget that I have ever expected that it was begun. Yet, what else could have been my alternative? Friendless, homeless, nameless—an orphan, worse than an orphan—the son of a harlot, my father even unknown! yet cursed with early aspirations and restlessness, and a half-glimmering of knowledge, and an

entire lust of whatever seemed enterprise—what wonder that I chose any thing rather than daily labour and perpetual contumely! After all, the fault is in fortune, and the world, not me! Oh, Lucy! had I but been born in your sphere, had I but possessed the claim to merit you, what would I not have done, and dared, and conquered, for your sake!"

Such, or similar to these, were the thoughts of Clifford during the interval between his resolution of seeing Lucy and the time of effecting it. The thoughts were of no pleasing, though of an exciting nature; nor were they greatly soothed by the ingenious occupation of cheating himself into the belief that, if he was a highwayman, it was altogether the fault of the highways.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Dream. Let me but see her, dear Leontine."

If humorous Lieutenant.

"Hempshirke. It was the fellow, sure."

Wolfort. What are you, sirrah?—"Beggar's Bush."

O that divine spirit, that burneth in every breast, tingling each with the sublime desire to be *seen*! that stirreth up the great to become little in order to seem greater, and that maketh a dashless woo thread for a voucher! Then that delightest in so many shapes, multiformous, yet the same; spirit that maketh the high despicable, and the low manner than his rival; equally great whether thou choicest a friend, or outtest a father; laughing all thou touchest with a bright vulgarity, that thy votaries imagine to be gold; thou that sendest the few to fashionable balls and the many to fashionable novels, —that smitest even Genius as well

as Folly, making the favourites of the Gods boast an acquaintance they have not with the graces of a mushroom peerage, rather than the knowledge they have of the Muses of an eternal Helicon!—thou that leavest in the great ocean of our manners no dry spot for the foot of independence, —that palest on the jaded eye with a moving and girdling panorama of dashed violences, and fratterest away the souls of free-born Britons into a powder smaller than the angels which dance in myriads on a pin's point. Whether, O spirit! thou callest thyself Fashion, or Ton, or Ambition, or Vanity, or Cringing, or Cant, or any title equally lofty and sublime—would

that from thy wings we could gain but a single plume? Fain would we, in fitting strain, describe the festivities of that memorable day, when the benevolent Lord Mauleverer received and blessed the admiring universe of Bath.

But to be less poetical, as certain writers say, when they have been writing nonsense—but to be less poetical, and more exact, this morning, though in the depth of winter, was bright and clear, and Lord Mauleverer found himself in particularly good health. Nothing could be better planned than the whole of his arrangements, unlike those which are ordinarily chosen for the express reason of being as foreign as possible to the nature of our climate, all at Lord Mauleverer's were made suitable to a Greenland atmosphere. The temples and summerhouses, interspersed through the grounds, were fitted up, some as Esquimaux huts, others as Russian pavilions: fires were carefully kept up; the musicians, Mauleverer took care should have as much wine as they pleased; they were set skillfully in places where they were unseen, but where they could be heard. One or two temporary buildings were erected for those who loved dancing; and as Mauleverer, miscalculating on the principles of human nature, thought gentlemen might be averse from ostentatious exhibition, he had hired persons to skate minuets and figures of eight upon his lakes, for the amusement of those who were fond of skating. All people who would be kind enough to dress in strange costumes, and make odd noises, which they called singing, the earl had carefully engaged, and planted in the best places for making them look still stranger than they were.

There was also plenty to eat, and more than plenty to drink. Mauleverer knew well that our countrymen and countrywomen, whatever be

their rank, like to have their spirits exalted. In short, the whole *déjeuner* was so admirably contrived, that it was probable the guests would not look much more melancholy during the amusements, than they would have done had they been otherwise engaged at a funeral.

Lucy and the squire were among the first arrivals.

Mauleverer, approaching the father and daughter with his most courtly manner, insisted on taking the latter under his own escort, and being her cicerone through the round of preparations.

As the crowd thickened, and it was observed how gallant were the attentions testified towards Lucy by the host, many and envious were the whispers of the guests! Those good people, naturally angry at the thought that two individuals should be married, divided themselves into two parties; one abused Lucy, and the other Lord Mauleverer: the former vituperated *her* art, the latter *his* folly. "I thought she would play her cards well—deceitful creature!" said the one. "January and May," muttered the other; "the man's sixty!" It was noticeable that the party against Lucy was chiefly composed of ladies, that against Mauleverer of men; that conduct must indeed be heinous which draws down the indignation of one's own sex!

Unconscious of her crimes, Lucy moved along, leaning on the arm of the gallant earl, and languidly smiling, with her heart far away, at his endeavours to amuse her. There was something interesting in the mere contrast of the pair; so touching seemed the beauty of the young girl, with her delicate cheek, maiden form, drooping eyelid, and quiet simplicity of air, in comparison to the worldly countenance and artificial grace of her companion.

After some time, when they were

in a sequestered part of the grounds. Mauleverer, observing that none were near, entered a rude hut, and so fascinated was he at that moment by the beauty of his guest, and so intent to have secured the opportunity of his confession, that he with difficulty suppressed the avowal rising to his lips, and took the more prudent plan of first sounding and preparing, as it were, the way.

"I cannot tell you, my dear Miss Brandon," said he, slightly pressing the beautiful hand leaning on his arm, "how happy I am to see you the guest—the queen, rather—of my house! Ah! could the bloom of youth return with its feelings! Time is never so cruel as when, while stealing from us the power to please, he leaves us in full vigour the unhappy privilege to be charmed!"

Mauleverer expected at least a flattering contradiction to the implied application of a sentiment so affectingly expressed; he was disappointed. Lucy, less alive than usual to the sentimental, or its reverse, scarcely perceived his meaning, and answered simply, "That it was very true." "This course of being like my friend Berta, was refused for one audience," thought Mauleverer, winking a little from the unexpected reply. "And yet!" he resumed, "I would not forgive my power to admire, futile—true, painful as it is. Even now while I gaze on you, my heart tells me that the pleasure I enjoy, it cost your countenance, at once, and for ever, to blight into misery; but while it tells me, I gaze on!"

Lucy raised her eyes, and something of her natural archness played in their expression.

"I believe, my lord," said she, moving from the hut, "that it would be better to join your guests: we'll have done, and what would be the gay Lord Mauleverer's self reproach, if he heard again of his fine compliments to——"

"The most charming person in Europe!" cried Mauleverer vehemently, and the hand which he before touched he now clasped: at that instant Lucy saw opposite to her, half hid by a cespice of evergreens, the figure of Clifford. His face, which seemed pale and wan, was not directed towards the place where she stood; and he evidently did not perceive Mauleverer or herself, yet so great was the effect that this glimpse of him produced on Lucy, that she trembled violently, and, unconsciously uttering a faint cry, snatched her hand from Mauleverer.

The earl started, and, catching the expression of her eyes, turned instantly towards the spot to which her gaze seemed riveted. He had not heard the rustling of the boughs, but he saw, with his habitual quickness of remark, that they still trembled, as if lately displaced, and he caught through their interstices the glimpse of a receding figure. He sprang forward with an agility very uncommon to his usual movements; but before he gained the copse, every vestige of the intruder had vanished.

What slaves we are to the moment! As Mauleverer turned back to rejoin Lucy, who, agitated almost to fainting, leaned against the rude wall of the hut, he would as soon have thought of flying as of making that generous offer of self, &c. which the instant before he had been burning to render Lucy. The vain are always sensitively jealous, and Mauleverer, remembering Clifford, and Lucy's blushes in dancing with him, instantly accounted for her agitation and its cause. With a very grave air he approached the subject of his late liberation, and requested to know if it were not some abrupt intruder that had occasioned her alarm. Lucy, scarcely knowing what she said, answered in a low voice, "That it was, indeed!" and begged instantly to rejoin her father.

Mauleverer offered his arm with great dignity, and the pair passed into the frequented part of the grounds, where Mauleverer once more brightened into smiles and courtesy to all around him.

"He is certainly accepted!" said Mr. Shrewd to Lady Simper.

"What an immense match for the girl!" was Lady Simper's reply.

Amidst the music, the dancing, the throng, the noise, Lucy found it easy to recover herself; and disengaging her arm from Lord Mauleverer, as she perceived her father, she rejoined the squire, and remained a patient listener to his remarks till, late in the noon, it became an understood matter that people were expected to go into a long room in order to eat and drink. Mauleverer, now alive to the duties of his situation, and feeling exceedingly angry with Lucy, was more reconciled than he otherwise might have been to the *etiquette* which obliged him to select for the object of his hospitable cares an old dowager duchess, instead of the beauty of the *file*; but he took care to point out to the squire the places appointed for himself and daughter, which were, though at some distance from the earl, under the providence of his vigilant survey.

While Mauleverer was deifying the Dowager Duchess, and refreshing his spirits with a chicken, and a medicinal glass of Madeira, the conversation near Lucy turned, to her infinite dismay, upon Clifford. Some one had seen him in the grounds, booted, and in a riding undress,—(in *that* day people seldom rode and danced in the same conformation of coat,)—and as Mauleverer was a precise person about those little matters of *etiquette*, this negligence of Clifford's made quite a subject of discussion. By degrees the conversation changed into the old inquiry as to who this Captain Clifford was; and just as it had reached that point, it reached also the gently deafened ears of Lord Mauleverer.

"Pray, my lord," said the old duchess, "since he is one of your guests, you, who know who and what every one is, can possibly inform us of the real family of this beautiful Mr. Clifford!"

"One of my guests, did you say?" answered Mauleverer, irritated greatly beyond his usual quietness of manner: "really, your grace does me wrong. He may be a guest of my valet, but he assuredly is not mine; and should I encounter him, I shall leave it to my valet to give him his *congé* as well as his invitation!"

Mauleverer, heightening his voice as he observed athwart the table an alternate paleness and flush upon Lucy's face, which stung all the angrier passions, generally torpid in him, into venom, looked round, on concluding, with a haughty and sarcastic air: so loud had been his tone, so pointed the insult, and so dead the silence at the table while he spoke that every one felt the affront must be carried at once to Clifford's hearing, should he be in the room. And after Mauleverer had ceased, there was an universal nervous and indistinct expectation of an answer and a scene; all was still, and it soon became certain that Clifford was not in the apartment. When Mr. Shrewd had fully convinced himself of this fact—(for there was a daring spirit about Clifford which few wished to draw upon themselves),—that personage broke the pause by observing that no man, who pretended to be a gentleman, would intrude himself, unasked and unwelcome, into any society; and Mauleverer, catching up the observation, said—(drinking wine at the same time with Mr. Shrewd),—that undoubtedly such conduct fully justified the rumours respecting Mr. Clifford, and utterly excluded him from that rank to which it was before more than suspected he had no claim.

So luminous and satisfactory an

opinion from such an authority, once broached, was immediately and universally agreed, and, long before the repast was over, it seemed to be tacitly agreed that Captain Clifford should be sent to Coventry, and if he murmured at the exile, he would have no right to insist upon being sent thence to the devil.

The good old squire, mindful of his former friendship for Clifford, and not apt to quarrel, was about to begin a speech on the occasion, when Lucy, touching his arm, implored him to be silent; and so ghastly was the paleness of her cheek while she spoke, that the squire's eyes, obtuse as he generally was, opened at once to the real secret of her heart. As soon as the truth flashed upon him, he wondered, recalling Clifford's great personal beauty and marked attractions, that it had not flashed upon him sooner; and hailing back on his chair, he sunk into one of the most unpleasant reveries he had ever experienced.

At a given signal the music for the dancers recommenced, and at a hint to that effect from the host, persons rose without ceremony to repair to other amusements, and suffer such guests as had hitherto been excluded from eating to occupy the place of the re-entrants. Lucy, glad to escape, was one of the first to resign her situation, and with the squire she returned to the grounds. During the longest evening had closed in, and the scene now really became fairy-like and picturesque — lamps hung from many a tree, reflecting the light through the richest and softest leaves, — the music itself sounded more magically than during the day — gipsy-tents were pitched at wild corners and copes, and the bright wood fires burning in them blazed merrily upon the cold yet cheerful air of the increasing night. The view was really novel and inviting; and as it had been an understood matter that ladies

were to bring furs, cloaks, and boots, all those who thought they looked well in such array made little groups, and scattered themselves about the grounds and in the tents. They, on the contrary, in whom "the purple light of love" was apt by the frost to be propelled from the cheeks to the central ornament of the face, or who thought a fire in a room quite as agreeable as a fire in a tent, remained within and contemplated the scene through the open windows.

Lucy longed to return home, nor was the squire reluctant; but, unhappily, it wanted an hour to the time at which the carriage had been ordered, and she mechanically joined a group of guests, who had persuaded the good-natured squire to forget his gout, and venture forth to look at the illuminations. Her party was soon joined by others, and the group gradually thickened into a crowd; the throng was stationary for a few minutes before a little temple, in which fireworks had just commenced an additional attraction to the scene. Opposite to this temple, as well as in its rear, the walks and trees had been purposely left in comparative darkness, in order to heighten the effect of the fireworks.

"I declare," said Lady Simper, glancing down one of the alleys which seemed to stretch away into blackness — "I declare it seems quite a lover's walk! how kind in Lord Mandeviler! — such a delicate attention —"

"To your ladyship!" added Mr. Shrewd, with a bow.

While one of this crowd, Lucy was vainly eyeing the long trains of lights which ever and anon shot against the sky, she felt her hand suddenly seized, and at the same time a voice whispered, "For God's sake, read this now and grant my request!"

The voice, which seemed to rise from the very heart of the speaker, Lucy knew at once; she trembled

violently, and remained for some minutes with eyes which did not dare to look from the ground. A note she felt had been left in her hand, and the agonized and earnest tone of that voice, which was dearer to her ear than the fulness of all music, made her impatient yet afraid to read it. As she recovered courage she looked around, and seeing that the attention of all was bent upon the fireworks, and that her father, in particular, leaning on his cane, seemed to enjoy the spectacle with a child's engrossed delight, she glided softly away, and entering unperceived one of the alleys, she read, by a solitary lamp that burned at its entrance, the following lines written in pencil and in a hurried hand, apparently upon a leaf torn from a pocket-book :

"I implore—I entreat you, Miss Brandon, to see me, if but for a moment. I purpose to tear myself away from the place in which you reside—to go abroad—to leave even the spot hallowed by your footstep. After this night, my presence, my presumption, will degrade you no more. But this night, for mercy's sake, see me, or I shall go mad! I will but speak to you one instant: this is all I ask. If you grant me this prayer, the walk to the left where you stand, at the entrance to which there is one purple lamp, will afford an opportunity to your mercy. A few yards down that walk I will meet you—none can see or hear us. Will you grant this? I know not—I dare not think: but under any case, your name shall be the last upon my lips. "P. C."

As Lucy read this hurried scrawl, she glanced towards the lamp above her, and saw that she had accidentally entered the very walk indicated in the note. She paused—she hesitated;—the impropriety—the singularity of the request, darted upon her at once; on the other hand, the anxious

voice still ringing in her ear, the incoherent vehemence of the note, the risk, the opprobrium Clifford had incurred, solely—her heart whispered—to see her, abated her simple temper, her kind feelings, and her love for the petitioner, in inducing her to consent. She cast one glance behind,—all seemed occupied with far other thoughts than that of notice towards her; she looked anxiously before,—all looked gloomy and indistinct; but suddenly, at some little distance, she descried a dark figure in motion. She felt her knees shake under her, her heart beat violently; she moved onward a few paces, again paused, and looked back; the figure before her moved as in approach, she resumed courage, and advanced—the figure was by her side.

"How generous, how condescending, is this goodness in Miss Brandon!" said the voice, which so struggled with secret and strong emotion, that Lucy scarcely recognized it as Clifford's. "I did not dare to expect it; and now—now that I meet you—" Clifford paused, as if seeking words, and Lucy, even through the dark, perceived that her strange companion was powerfully excited; she waited for him to continue, but observing that he walked on in silence, she said, though with a trembling voice, "Indeed, Mr. Clifford, I fear that it is very, very improper in me to meet you thus; nothing but the strong expressions in your letter—and—and—in short, my fear that you meditated some desperate design, at which I could not guess, caused me to yield to your wish for an interview." She paused, and Clifford, still preserving silence, she added, with some little coldness in her tone, "If you have really ought to say to me, you must allow me to request that you speak it quickly. This interview, you must be sensible, ought to end almost as soon as it begins."

"Hear me then!" said Clifford, mastering his embarrassment, and speaking in a firm and clear voice—"at that time, which I have but just heard, was it true that I have been spoken of in your presence in terms of insult and affront?"

It was now for Lucy to feel embarrassed; fearful to give pain, and yet anxious that Clifford should know, in order that he might despise, the slight and the suspicion which the mystery around him drew upon his name, she hovered between the two feelings, and without satisfying the latter succeeded in realising the fear of the former.

"Enough!" said Clifford, in a tone of deep mortification, as his quick ear caught and interpreted, yet more humbly than the truth, the meaning of her stammered and confused reply. "Enough! I see that it is true, and that the only human being in the world to whose good opinion I am not indifferent has been a witness of the insulting manner in which others have dared to speak of me!"

"But," said Lucy, eagerly, "why give the curious or the idle any excuse? Why not suffer your parentage and family to be publicly known? Why are you here?"—and her voice sank into a lower key—"this very day, quashed, and therefore subject to the scold of all who think the poor destination of an invitation an honour! Pardon me, Mr. Clifford, perhaps I offend—I hurt you by speaking thus rankly, but your good name rests with yourself, and your friends cannot but feel angry that you should trifle with it."

"Madam!" said Clifford, and Lucy's eyes, now growing accustomed to the darkness, perceived a bitter smile upon his lips. "my name, good or ill, is an object of little care to me. I have read of philosophers who pride themselves in placing no value in the opinions of the world. Rank me

among that sect—but I am, I own I am, anxious that you alone, of all the world, should not despise me; and now that I feel you do—that you must—every thing worth living or hoping for is past!"

"Despise you?" said Lucy, and her eyes filled with tears—"indeed you wrong me and yourself. But listen to me, Mr. Clifford: I have seen, it is true, but little of the world, yet I have seen enough to make me wish I could have lived in retirement for ever; the rarest quality among either sex, though it is the simplest, seems to me, good-nature; and the only occupation of what are termed fashionable people appears to be speaking ill of one another—nothing gives such a scope to scandal as mystery; nothing disarms it like openness. I know—your friends know, Mr. Clifford, that your character can bear inspection; and I believe, for my own part, the same of your family. Why not, then, declare who and what you are?"

"That candour would indeed be my best defender," said Clifford, in a tone which ran displeasingly through Lucy's ear; "but in truth, madam, I repeat, I care not one drop of this worthless blood what men say of me; that time has passed, and for ever; perhaps it never keenly existed for me—no matter. I came hither, Miss Brandon, not wasting a thought on these sickening fancies, or on the heavy idler by whom they are given! I came hither, only once more to see you—to hear you speak—to watch you move—to tell you—and the speaker's voice trembled, so as to be scarcely audible—to tell you, if any reason for the disclosure offered itself, that I have had the boldness—the crime to love—to love—O God! to adore you! and then to leave you for ever!"

Pale, trembling, scarcely preserved from falling by the tree against which she leaned, Lucy listened to this abrupt avowal.

"Dare I touch this hand," continued Clifford, as he knelt and took it, timidly and reverently: "you know not, you cannot dream, how unworthy is he who thus presumes—yet, not all unworthy, while he is sensible of so deep, so holy a feeling as that which he bears to you. God bless you, Miss Brandon!—Lucy, God bless you!—And if, hereafter, you hear me subjected to still blacker suspicion, or severer scrutiny, than that which I now sustain—if even your charity and goodness can find no defence for me,—if the suspicion become certainty, and the scrutiny end in condemnation, believe, at least, that circumstances have carried me beyond my nature; and that under fairer auspices I might have been other than I am!" Lucy's tear dropped upon Clifford's hand, as he spoke; and while his heart melted within him as he felt it, and knew his own desperate and unredeemed condition, he added,—

"Every one courts you—the proud, the rich, the young, the high-born, all are at your feet! You will select one of that number for your husband: may he watch over you as I would have done!—love you as I do he *cannot*! Yes, I repeat it!" continued Clifford, vehemently, "he *cannot*! None amidst the gay, happy, silken crowd of your equals and followers *can* feel for you that single and overruling passion, which makes you to me what all combined—country, power, wealth, reputation, an honest name, peace, common safety, the quiet of the common air, alike the least blessing and the greatest—are to all others! Once more, may God in heaven watch over you and preserve you! I tear myself, on leaving you, from all that cheers, or blesses, or raises, or might have saved me!—Farewell!"

The hand which Lucy had relinquished to her strange suitor was

pressed ardently to his lips, dropped in the same instant, and she knew that she was once more alone.

But Clifford, hurrying rapidly through the trees, made his way towards the nearest gate which led from Lord Mauleverer's domain; when he reached it, a crowd of the more elderly guests occupied the entrance, and one of these was a lady of such distinction, that Mauleverer, in spite of his aversion to any superfluous exposure to the night air, had obliged himself to conduct her to her carriage. He was in a very ill humour with this constrained politeness, especially as the carriage was very slow in relieving him of his charge, when he saw, by the lamplight, Clifford passing near him, and winning his way to the gate. Quite forgetting his worldly prudence which should have made him averse to scenes with any one, especially with a flying enemy, and a man with whom, if he believed aright, little glory was to be gained in conquest, much less in contest; and only remembering Clifford's rivalry, and his own hatred towards him for the presumption, Mauleverer, uttering a hurried apology to the lady on his arm, stepped forward, and, opposing Clifford's progress, said, with a bow of tranquil insult, "Pardon me, sir, but is it at *my* invitation, or that of one of my servants, that you have honoured me with your company this day?"

Clifford's thoughts at the time of this interruption were of that nature before which all petty misfortunes shrink into nothing; if, therefore, he started for a moment at the earl's address, he betrayed no embarrassment in reply, but bowing with an air of respect, and taking no notice of the affront implied in Mauleverer's speech, he answered,—

"Your lordship has only to deign a glance at my dress, to see that I have not intruded myself on your grounds with the intention of claiming

your hospitality. The fact is, and I trust to your lordship's courtesy to admit the excuse, that I leave this neighbourhood to-morrow, and for some length of time. A person whom I was very anxious to see before I left was one of your lordship's guests. I heard this, and knew that I should have no other opportunity of meeting the person in question before my departure, and I must now throw myself on the well-known politeness of Lord Mauleverer, to pardon a freedom originating in a business very much approaching to a necessity!"

Lord Mauleverer said little to Clifford had congregated an immediate crowd of eager and expectant listeners, but so quickly respectful and ready gentlemen. Lord Clifford's air and tone in expressing himself, that the whole company were smitten with a sudden disappointment.

Lord Mauleverer himself surprised by the temper and deportment of the unbidden guest, was at a loss for one moment, and Clifford was about to take advantage of that moment and glide away, when Mauleverer, with a sudden look more cruel than the former one, said:

"I cannot but be happy, sir, that my poor place has afforded you any amusement; but, if I am not very importunate, will you allow me to inquire the name of my guest with whom you received a morning?"

"My lord," said Clifford, drawing himself up, and speaking gravely and slowly, though still with a certain defiance—"I need not surely point out to your lordship's good sense and good feeling, that your very question implies a doubt, and, consequently, an offence, and that the tone of it is not such as to justify that assumption on my part which the feeble explanation you require would imply!"

For spoken assurance could be no better as that silent one which Mauleverer could command by a smile,

and, with this complimentary expression on his thin lips and raised brow, the earl answered: "Sir, I honour the skill testified by your reply; it must be the result of a profound experience in these affairs. I wish you, sir, a very good night; and the next time you favour me with a visit, I am quite sure that your motives for so indulging me will be no less creditable to you than at present."

With these words, Mauleverer turned to regain his fair charge. But Clifford was a man who had seen in a short time a great deal of the world, and knew tolerably well the theories of society, if not the practice of it; a subtle, moreover, he was of an acute and resolute temper, and the proportions of mind, natural and acquired, told him that he was now in a situation in which it had become more necessary to defy than to conciliate. Instead therefore of retiring he walked deliberately up to Mauleverer, and said:

"My lord, I shall leave it to the judgment of your guests to decide whether you have acted the part of a nobleman and a gentleman in thus, in your domestic, receiving one who has given you such explanation of his trespass as would fully excuse him in the eyes of all considerate or courteous persons. I shall also leave it to them to decide whether the tone of your inquiry allowed me to give you any further apology. But I shall take it upon myself, my lord, to demand from you an immediate explanation of your last speech."

"Insolent!" cried Mauleverer, colouring with indignation, and almost for the first time in his life losing absolute command over his temper; "do you hardly words with me—Begone, or I shall order my servants to thrust you forth!"

"Begone, sir—begone!" cried so loud voices in echo to Mauleverer, from those persons who deemed it

now high time to take part with the powerful.

Clifford stood his ground, gazing around with a look of angry and detesting contempt, which, joined to his athletic frame, his dark and fierce eye, and a heavy riding whip, which, as if mechanically, he half raised, effectually kept the murmurers from proceeding to violence.

"Poor pretender to breeding and to sense!" said he, disheartedly turning to Maulverer; "with one touch of this whip I could shame you for ever, or compel you to descend from

the level of your rank to that of mine, and the action would be but a mild return to your language. But I love rather to teach you than to correct. According to my creed, my lord, he conquers most in good breeding who forbears the most—*scorn* enables me to forbear! Adieu!"

With this, Clifford turned on his heel and strode away. A murmur, approaching to a groan, from the younger or sillier part of the parasites (the mature and the sensible have no extra emotion to throw away), followed him as he disappeared.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Outlaw. Stand, sir, and throw us that you have about you!"

Val. Ruffians, forego that rude, uncivil touch!"

The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

ON leaving the scene in which he had been so unwelcome a guest, Clifford hastened to the little inn where he had left his horse. He mounted and returned to Bath. His thoughts were absent, and he unconsciously suffered the horse to direct its course whither it pleased. This was naturally towards the nearest halting-place which the animal remembered; and this halting-place was at that illustrious tavern, in the suburbs of the town, in which we have before commemorated Clifford's re-election to the dignity of chief. It was a house of long-established reputation; and here news of any of the absent confederates was always to be obtained. This circumstance, added to the excellence of its drink, its ease, and the electric chain of early habits, rendered it a favourite haunt, even despite their present gay and modish pursuits, with Tomlinson and Pepper; and here, when Clifford sought the pair at unreasonable hours, was he

for the most part sure to find them. As his meditations were interrupted by the sudden stopping of his horse beneath the well-known sign, Clifford, muttering an angry malediction on the animal, spurred it onward in the direction of his own home. He had already reached the end of the street, when his resolution seemed to change, and muttering to himself, "Ay, I might as well arrange this very night for our departure!" he turned his horse's head backward, and was once more at the tavern door. He threw the bridle over an iron railing, and knocking with a peculiar sound at the door, was soon admitted.

"Are — and — here?" asked he of the old woman, as he entered, mentioning the cant words by which, among friends, Tomlinson and Pepper were usually known. "They are both gone on the sharps to-night," replied the old lady, lifting her unsnuffed candle to the face of the speaker

with an intelligent look : " Oliver * is asleep, and the lads will take advantage of his nap."

" Do you mean," answered Clifford, replying in the same key, which we take the liberty to paraphrase, " that they are out on any actual expedition?"

" To be sure," rejoined the dame. " They are big late on the road may want supper for supper!"

" Ha! which road?"

" You are a pretty fellow for captain!" rejoined the dame, with a good-natured sarcasm in her tone.

" Why, Captain Gloak, poor fellow! knew every horn of his men to a hair, and never needed to ask what they were about. Ah, he was a fellow! none of your girl-faced madgers, who make love to ladies, far enough—a pretty woman need not look far for a kiss when he was in the room. I warrant, however coarse her duels might be, and hark! but the captain was a sensitive man, and liked a cow as well as a calf."

" So, well on the road are they?" cried Clifford, musingly, and without heeding the insinuated attack on his discretion. " But answer me, what is the plan?—Be quick."

" Why," replied the dame, " there's some good wine of a lord gives a blow-out to-day, and the lads, dear souls! think to play the queer on some stranger."

Without uttering a word, Clifford darted from the house, and was re-mounted before the old lady had time to recover her surprise.

" If you want to see them," cried she, as he put spurs to his horse, " they ordered me to have supper ready at ——" The horse's hoofs drew out the last words of the dame, and, excitedly re-belling the door, and muttering an indistinct comparison between Captain Clifford and Captain

Gloak, the good landlady returned to those ordinary operations destined to rejoice the hearts of Tomlinson and Pepper.

Return we ourselves to Lucy. It so happened that the squire's carriage was the last to arrive; for the coachman, long undisturbed among the shades of Warlock into the dissipation of fashionable life, entered on his *début* at Bath, with all the vigorous heat of matured passions for the first time released, into the festivities of the ale-house, and having a milder master than most of his comrades, the fear of disposure was less strong in his arched bosom than the love of companionship, so that during the time this gentleman was amusing himself, Lucy had ample leisure for enjoying all the thousand-and-one repasts of the scene between Monteverer and Clifford, which regaled her ears. Nevertheless, whatever might have been her feelings at these pleasing recitals, a certain vague joy predominated over all. A man feels but slight comparative happiness in being loved, if he know that it is in vain. But to a woman that simple knowledge is sufficient to destroy the memory of a thousand distresses, and it is not till she has told her heart again and again that she is loved, that she will even begin to ask if it be in vain.

It was a partially dark, yet a dim and obscure night, for the moon had for the last hour or two been surrounded by mist and cloud, when at length the carriage arrived; and Monteverer, for the second time that evening playing the escort, conducted Lucy to the vehicle. Anxious to learn if she had seen or been addressed by Clifford, the whole earl, as he led her to the gate, dwelt particularly on the intrusion of that person, and by the trembling of the hand which rested on his arm, he drew no delusive hopes for his own hopes. " How queer," thought he, " the man goes

* The moon.

to-morrow, and then the field will be clear: the girl's a child yet, and I forgive her folly." And with an air of chivalric veneration, Mauleverer bowed the object of his pardon into her carriage.

As soon as Lucy felt herself alone with her father, the emotions so long pent within her forced themselves into vent, and leaning back against the carriage, she wept, though in silence, tears, burning tears, of sorrow, comfort, agitation, anxiety.

The good old squire was slow in perceiving his daughter's emotion: it would have escaped him altogether, if, actuated by a kindly warming of the heart towards her, originating in his new suspicion of her love for Clifford, he had not put his arm round her neck; and this unexpected caress so entirely unstrung her nerves, that Lucy at once threw herself upon her father's breast, and her weeping, hitherto so quiet, became distinct and audible.

"Be comforted, my dear, dear child!" said the squire, almost affected to tears himself; and his emotion, arousing him from his usual mental confusion, rendered his words less involved and equivocal than they were wont to be. "And now I do hope that you won't vex yourself; the young man is indeed—and, I do assure you, I always thought so—a very charming gentleman, there's no denying it. But what can we do? You see what they all say of him, and it really was—we must allow that—very improper in him to come without being asked. Moreover, my dearest child, it is very wrong, very wrong, indeed, to love any one, and not know who he is; and—and—but don't cry, my dear love, don't cry so; all will be very well, I am sure—quite sure!"

As he said this, the kind old man drew his daughter nearer him, and feeling his hand hurt by something

she wore unseen which pressed against it, he inquired, with some suspicion that the love might have proceeded to love-gifts, what it was.

"It is my mother's picture," said Lucy, simply, and putting it aside.

The old squire had loved his wife tenderly, and when Lucy made this reply, all the fond and warm recollections of his youth rushed upon him: he thought, too, how earnestly on her death-bed that wife had recommended to his vigilant care their only child now weeping on his bosom; he remembered how, dwelling on that which to all women seems the grand epoch of life, she had said, "Never let her affections be trifled with,—never be persuaded by your ambitious brother to make her marry where she loves not, or to oppose her, without strong reason, where she does: though she be but a child now, I know enough of her to feel convinced that if ever she love, she will love too well for her own happiness, even with all things in her favour." These words, these recollections, joined to the remembrance of the cold-hearted scheme of William Brandon, which he had allowed himself to favour, and of his own supineness towards Lucy's growing love for Clifford, till resistance became at once necessary and too late, all smote him with a remorseful sorrow, and fairly sobbing himself, he said, "Thy mother, child! ah, would that she were living, she would never have neglected thee as I have done!"

The squire's self-reproach made Lucy's tears cease on the instant, and, as she covered her father's hand with kisses, she replied only by vehement accusations against herself, and praises of his too great fatherly fondness and affection. This little burst, on both sides, of honest and simple-hearted love, ended in a silence full of tender and mingled thoughts: and as Lucy still clung to the breast of the old man, unsmooth as he was in temper

below even mediocrity in intellect, and altogether the last person in age, or mind, or habit, that seemed fit for a confidant in the love of a young and enthusiastic girl, she felt the old honesty truth, that under all disadvantages there are, in this hollow world, few in whom trust can be so easily reposed, few who so delicately and selflessly respect the confidence, as those from whom we spring.

The father and daughter had been silent for some minutes, and the former was about to speak, when the carriage suddenly stopped. The squire heard a rough voice at the horse's head, he looked forth from the window to see, through the mist of the night, what could possibly be the matter, and he contemplated in this action, just one inch from his forehead, the protruded and shining barrel of a horse-pistol. We may imagine, without a reflection on his courage, that Mr. Brandon threw himself back into his carriage with all possible despatch; and at the same moment the door was opened, and a voice well not in a threatening, but a smooth accent, "Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry to disturb you, but want to implore, oblige me with your money, your watches, your rings, and any other little commodities of a similar nature!"

So delicate a request the squire had not the heart to refuse, he more especially so he knew himself without any suspicion of defence; accordingly he drew out a purse, not very full it must be owned, together with an immense silver hunting watch, with a piece of black ribbon attached to it: "There, sir," said he, with a groan, "don't frighten the young lady."

The gentle applicant, who indeed was no other than the opulent Augustus Tomlinson, slid the purse into his waistcoat pocket, after having its contents with a rapid and silent finger. "Your watch, sir," quoth he, and as he spoke he thrust it carefully into

his coat-pocket, as a school-boy would thrust a peg-top, "is heavy; but trusting to experience, since an accurate survey is denied me, I fear it is more valuable from its weight than its workmanship; however, I will not wound your vanity by affecting to be fastidious. But surely the young lady, as you call her,—(for I pay you the compliment of believing your word as to her age, inasmuch as the night is too dark to allow me the happiness of a personal inspection,)—the young lady has surely some little trinket she can dispense with; 'Beauty when unadorned,' you know, &c."

Lucy, who, though greatly frightened, lost neither her senses nor her presence of mind, only answered by drawing forth a little silk purse, that contained still less than the leathern convenience of the squire; to this she added a gold chain; and Tomlinson, taking them with an affectionate squeeze of the hand, and a polite apology, was about to withdraw, when his sagacious eyes were suddenly stricken by the gleam of jewels. The fact was, that in altering the position of her mother's picture, which had been set in the few hereditary diamonds possessed by the Lord of Warlock, Lucy had allowed it to hang on the outside of her dress, and bending forward to give the robber her other possessions, the diamonds at once came in full sight, and gleamed the more invitingly from the darkness of the night.

"Ah, madam!" said Tomlinson, stretching forth his hand, "you would play me false, would you! Treachery should never go unpunished. Pavour me instantly with the little ornament round your neck!"

"I cannot—I cannot!" said Lucy grasping her treasure with both her hands,—“it is my mother's picture and my mother is dead!”

"The wants of others, madam, returned Tomlinson, who could no

for the life of him *rob immorally*. "are ever more worthy your attention than fairly prejudiced. Seriously, give it, and that instantly, we are in a hurry, and your horses are plunging like devils: they will break your carriage in an instant—despatch!"

The squire was a brave man on the whole, though no hero, and the nerves of an old foxhunter soon recover from a little alarm. The picture of his buried wife was yet more inestimable to him than it was to Lucy, and at this new demand his spirit was roused within him.

He clenched his fists, and advancing himself, as it were, on his seat, he cried in a loud voice:—

"Begone, fellow!—I have given you—for my own part I think so—too much already; and by G—d you shall not have the picture!"

"Don't force me to use violence!" said Augustus, and putting one foot on the carriage-step, he brought his pistol within a few inches of Lucy's breast, rightly judging, perhaps, that the show of danger to her would be the best method to intimidate the squire. At that instant the valorous moralist found himself suddenly seized with a powerful gripe on the shoulder, and a low voice, trembling with passion, hissed in his ear. Whatever might be the words that startled his organs, they operated as an instantaneous charm; and to their astonishment, the squire and Lucy beheld their assailant abruptly withdraw. The door of the carriage was clapped to, and scarcely two minutes had elapsed before, the robber having remounted, his comrade—(hitherto stationed at the horses' heads)—set spurs to his own steed, and the welcome sound of receding hoofs smote upon the bewildered ears of the father and daughter.

The door of the carriage was again opened, and a voice, which made Lucy paler than the preceding terror, said,—

"I fear, Mr. Brandon, the robbers

have frightened your daughter. There is now, however, nothing to fear—the ruffians are gone."

"God bless me!" said the squire: "why, is that Captain Clifford?"

"It is! and he conceives himself too fortunate to have been of the smallest service to Mr. and Miss Brandon."

On having convinced himself that it was indeed to Mr. Clifford that he owed his safety, as well as that of his daughter, whom he believed to have been in a far more imminent peril than she really was,—(for to tell thee the truth, reader, the pistol of Tomlinson was rather calculated for show than use, having a peculiarly long bright barrel with nothing in it,)—the squire was utterly at a loss how to express his gratitude; and when he turned to Lucy to beg she would herself thank their gallant deliverer, he found that, overpowered with various emotions, she had, for the first time in her life, fainted away.

"Good Heavens!" cried the alarmed father, "she is dead,—my Lucy—my Lucy—they have killed her!"

To open the door nearest to Lucy, to bear her from the carriage in his arms, was to Clifford the work of an instant; utterly unconscious of the presence of any one else—unconscious even of what he said, he poured forth a thousand wild, passionate, yet half audible expressions; and as he bore her to a bank by the roadside, and, seating himself, supported her against his bosom, it would be difficult, perhaps, to say, whether something of delight—of burning and thrilling delight—was not mingled with his anxiety and terror. He chafed her small hands in his own—his 'breath, all trembling and warm, glowed upon her cheek, and once, and but once, his lips drew nearer, and breathing aside the dishevelled richness of her tresses, clung in a long and silent kiss to her own.

Meanwhile, by the help of his foot

man, who had now somewhat recovered his astonished senses, the squire descended from his carriage, and approached with faltering steps the place where his daughter reclined. At the instant that he took her hand, Lucy began to revive, and the first action, in the bewildered unconsciousness of awaking, was to throw her arm around the neck of her supporter.

Could all the hours and realities of hope, joy, pleasure, in Clifford's previous life have been melted down and concentrated into a single emotion, that emotion would have been but taste to the rapture of Lucy's momentary and innocent caress! And at a later yet no distant period, when in the future's still the grim visage of Death seemed upon him, it may be questioned whether his thoughts dwelt not the more often on the remembrance of that delightful moment, than on the bitterness and ignominy of an approaching doom.

"She breathes—she moves—she wakes!" cried the father, and Lucy, attempting to rise, and recognising the squire's voice, said faintly, "Thank God my dear father, you are not hurt! And are they really gone?—and where—where are we?"

The squire, relieving Clifford of his charge, folded his child in his arms, while in his own ambulatory manner he informed her where she was, and with whom. The lovers stood face to face to each other, but what delicious blushes did the sight, which concealed all but the outlines of their forms, hide from the eyes of Clifford!

The honest and kind heart of Mr. Brandon was glad of a release to the indignant sentiments it had always cherished towards the suspected and maligned Clifford, and knowing now from Lucy, it fairly poured itself forth upon her deliverer. He grasped him warmly by the hand, and insisted upon his accompanying them to Bath in the carriage, and allowing the footman

to ride his horse. This offer was still pending, when the footman, who had been to see after the health and comfort of his fellow-servant, came to inform the party in a dolorous accent, of something which, in the confusion and darkness of the night, they had not yet learned,—namely, that the horses and coachman were—gone!

"Gone!" said the squire—"gone!—why the villains can't—for my part, I never believe, though I have heard such wonders of, those sleights of hands—have bagged them!"

Here a low groan was audible, and the footman, sympathetically guided to the spot whence it emanated, found the huge body of the coachman safely deposited, with its face downward, in the middle of the kennel. After this worthy had been lifted to his legs, and had shaken himself into intelligence, it was found that when the robber had detained the horses, the coachman, who required very little to conquer his more bellicose faculties, had—(he himself said, by a violent blow from the ruffian, though, perhaps, the cause lay nearer home)—quitted the coach-box for the kennel, the horses grew frightened, and after plunging and rearing till he cared no longer to occupy himself with their arrest, the highwayman had very quietly cut the traces, and by the time present, it was not impossible that the horses were almost at the door of their stables at Bath.

The footman who had apprised the squire of this misfortune was, unlike most new-tellers, the first to offer consolation.

"There be an excellent public," quoth he, "about a half a mile on, where your honour could get horses; or, mayhap, if Miss Lucy, poor heart, be fain, you may like to stop for the night."

Though a walk of half a mile in a dark night, and under other circumstances, would not have seemed a

grateful proposition, yet, at present, when the squire's imagination had only pictured to him the alternatives of passing the night in the carriage, or of crawling on foot to Bath, it seemed but a very insignificant hardship. And tucking his daughter's arm under his own, while in a kind voice he told Clifford "to support her on the other side," the squire ordered the footman to lead the way with Clifford's horse, and the coachman to follow or be damned, which ever he pleased.

In silence Clifford offered his arm to Lucy, and silently she accepted the courtesy. The squire was the only talker, and the theme he chose was not ungrateful to Lucy, for it was the praise of her lover. But Clifford scarcely listened, for a thousand thoughts and feelings contested within him; and the light touch of Lucy's hand upon his arm would alone have been sufficient to distract and confuse his attention. The darkness of the night, the late excitement, the stolen kiss that still glowed upon his lips, the remembrance of Lucy's flattering agitation in the scene with her at Lord Mauleverer's, the yet warmer one of that unconscious embrace, which still tingled through every nerve of his frame, all conspired with the delicious emotion which he now experienced at her presence and her contact to intoxicate and inflame him. Oh, those burning moments in love, when romance has just mellowed into passion, and without losing any thing of its luxurious vagueness, mingles the enthusiasm of its dreams with the ardent desires of reality and earth! *That* is the exact time, when love has reached its highest point,—when all feelings, all thoughts, the whole soul, and the whole mind, are seized and engrossed,—when every difficulty weighed in the opposite scale seems lighter than dust,—when to renounce the object beloved is the most deadly and lasting sacrifice,—and when in so many breasts, where

honour, conscience, virtue, are far stronger than we can believe them ever to have been in a criminal like Clifford, honour, conscience, virtue, have perished at once and suddenly into ashes before that mighty and irresistible fire.

The servant, who had had previous opportunities of ascertaining the topography of the "public" of which he spake, and who was perhaps tolerably reconciled to his late terror in the anticipation of renewing his intimacy with "the spirits of the past," now directed the attention of our travellers to a small inn just before them. Mine host had not yet retired to repose, and it was not necessary to knock twice before the door was opened.

A bright fire, an officious landlady, a commiserate landlord, a warm potation, and the promise of excellent beds, all appeared to our squire to make ample amends for the intelligence that the inn was not licensed to let post-horses; and mine host having promised forthwith to send two stout fellows, a rope, and a cart-horse, to bring the carriage under shelter (for the squire valued the vehicle *because* it was twenty years old), and, moreover, to have the harness repaired, and the horses ready by an early hour the next day, the good humour of Mr Brandon rose into positive hilarity. Lucy retired under the auspices of the landlady to bed, and the squire having drunk a bowl of bishop, and discovered a thousand new virtues in Clifford, especially that of never interrupting a good story, clapped the captain on the shoulder, and making him promise not to leave the inn till he had seen him again, withdrew also to the repose of his pillow. Clifford remained below, gazing abstractedly on the fire for some time afterwards; nor was it till the drowsy chambermaid had thrice informed him of the prepared comforts of his bed, that he adjourned

to his chamber. Even then it seems that sleep did not visit his eyelids, for a wealthy grazier, who lay in the room below, complained bitterly 'the next

morning of some person walking overhead "in all manner of strides, just for all the world like a happarition in boots."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"*Viola.*—And dost thou love me?"

Leicester. Love thee, *Viola*?

Do I not fly thee when my being drunks

Light from thine eyes?—that light is all my answer!"

The Bride, Act II., Scene 1.

THE certain meditations of the squire had not been without the produce of a resolve. His warm heart at once responded to the liking he had formerly conceived for Clifford; he looked for an opportunity to atone for his past indifference, and to testify his present gratitude; moreover, he felt at once ashamed at, and ashamed of, his late conduct in passing the peasant and, as he now fully believed, the genuine proposition against his young friend, and before a more potent and a stronger sentiment his former defence for his brother's conduct faded easily away. Coupled with these favourable feelings towards Clifford were his sanguine expectations, or rather certainty, of Lucy's attachment to her handsome deliverer; and he had at least sufficient penetration to perceive that she was not likely to leave him the loss for the night's adventure. To all this was added the tender recollection of his wife's parting words; and the tears and delicate agitation of Lucy in the carriage were sufficient to his simple mind, which knew not how lightly incidents were to be shed and dried, to confirm the prediction of the dear deceased. Nor were the squire's more generous and kindly feelings utterly unmoved with selfish considerations. Proud, but not the least unfeeling, he was always more ready to confer an honour than

receive one, and at heart he was secretly glad at the notion of exchanging, as a son-in-law, the polished and *unfamiliar* Manleverer for the agreeable and social Clifford. Such, in "adorned disorder," were the thoughts which rolled through the teeming brain of Joseph Brandon, and before he had turned on his left side, which he always did preparatory to surrendering himself to slumber, the squire had fully come to a determination most fatal to the schemes of the lawyer and the hopes of the earl.

The next morning, as Lucy was knitting

"The loose train of her amber-dropping hair"

before the little mirror of her chamber, which even through its dimmed and darkened glass gave back a face which might have shamed a Grecian vision of Aurora, a gentle tap at her door announced her father. There was in his rosy and comely countenance that expression generally characteristic of a man pleased with himself, and persuaded that he is about to give pleasure.

"My dear child," said the squire, fondly stroking down the luxuriance of his Lucy's hair, and kissing her damask cheek. "I am come to have some little conversation with you: and

down now, and for my part, I love to talk at my ease: and, by the by, shut the window, my love, it is an easterly wind; I wish that we may come to a clear and distinct understanding. Hem!—give me your hand, my child,—I think on these matters one can scarcely speak too precisely and to the purpose; although I am well aware—for, for my own part, I always wish to act to every one, to you especially, my dearest child, with the greatest consideration—that we must go to work with as much delicacy as conscience. You know this Captain Clifford,—’tis a brave youth, is it not?—well—nay, never blush so deeply, there is nothing (for in these matters one can’t have all one’s wishes, —one can’t have *everything*) to be *ashamed of!* Tell me now, child, dost think he is in love with thee?”

If Lucy did not immediately answer by words, her pretty lips moved as if she could readily reply; and, finally, they settled into so sweet and so assured a smile, that the squire, fond as he was of “precise” information, was in want of no fuller answer to his question.

“Ay, ay, young lady,” said he, looking at her with all a father’s affection, “I see how it is. And, come now,—what do you turn away for? Dost think if, as I believe, though there are envious persons in the world, as there always are when a man’s handsome, or clever, or brave; though, by the way, which is a very droll thing in my eyes, they don’t envy, at least not ill-naturedly, a man for being a lord, or rich; but, quite on the contrary, rank and money seem to make them think one has all the cardinal virtues. Humph!—If, I say, this Mr. Clifford should turn out to be a gentleman of family,—for you know that is essential, since the Brandons have, as my brother has probably told you, been a great race many centuries ago:—dost think, my

child, that thou couldst give up (the cat is out of the bag) this old lord, and marry a simple gentleman?”

The hand which the squire had held was now with an arch tenderness applied to his mouth, and when he again seized it Lucy had her glowing face in his bosom; and it was only by a whisper, as if the very air was garrulous, that he could draw forth (for now he insisted on a verbal reply) her happy answer.

We are not afraid that our reader will blame us for not detailing the rest of the interview between the father and daughter: it did not last above an hour longer; for the squire declared that, for his own part, he hated more words than were necessary. Mr. Brandon was the first to descend to the breakfast, muttering as he descended the stairs, “Well now, hang me if I am not glad that’s off (for I do not like to think much of so silly a matter) my mind. And as for my brother, I sha’n’t tell him till it’s all over and settled. And if he is angry, he and the old lord may, though I don’t mean to be unbrotherly, go to the devil together!”

When the three were assembled at the breakfast-table, there could not, perhaps, have been found any where a stronger contrast than that which the radiant face of Lucy bore to the haggard and worn expression that disfigured the handsome features of her lover. So marked was the change that one might seem to have wrought upon Clifford, that even the squire was startled and alarmed at it. But Lucy, whose innocent vanity pleased itself with accounting for the alteration, consoled herself with the hope of soon witnessing a very different expression on the countenance of her lover; and though she was silent, and her happiness lay quiet and deep within her, yet in her eyes and lip there was that which seemed to Clifford an insult to his own misery, and

stung him to the heart. However, he exerted himself to meet the conversation of the squire, and to mask as well as he was able the evidence of the conflict which still raged within him.

The morning was wet and gloomy ; it was that drizzling and misty rain which is so especially nutritious to the growth of blue devils, and the jolly squire failed not to rally his young friend upon his feminine susceptibility to the influences of the weather. Clifford replied jestingly, and the jest, if bad, was good enough to content the railler. In this facetious manner passed the time, till Lucy, at the request of her father, left the room to prepare for their return home.

Drawing his chair near to Clifford's, the squire then commenced in real and affectionate earnest his operations—those he had already planned—in the following order : they were, first, to assure him, and to learn, Clifford's rank, family, and prospects ; secondly, having ascertained the proprieties of the outer man, they were to examine the state of the inner one ; and, thirdly, should our diffident inquirer find his guesses at Clifford's affection for Lucy confirmed, they were to expel the modest fear of a repulse, which the squire allowed was natural enough, and to lead the object of the inquiry to a knowledge of the happiness that, Lucy consenting, might be in store for him. While, with his wonted courtesy, the squire was pursuing his benevolent designs, Lucy remained in her own room, in such meditation and such dreams as were natural to a heart so sanguine and enthusiastic.

She had been more than half an hour alone, when the chambermaid of the house knocked at her door, and delivered a message from the squire, begging her to come down to him in the parlour. With a heart that beat so violently it almost seemed to wear

away its very life, Lucy slowly, and with tremulous steps, descended to the parlour. On opening the door she saw Clifford standing in the recess of the window : his face was partly turned from her, and his eyes downcast. The good old squire sat in an elbow-chair, and a sort of puzzled and half-satisfied complacency gave expression to his features.

"Come hither, child," said he, clearing his throat ; "Captain Clifford—a-hem—has done you the honour—to—and I dare say you will be very much surprised—not that, for my own part, I think there is much to wonder at in it, but such may be my partial opinion (and it is certainly very natural in me)—to make you a declaration of love. He declares, moreover, that he is the most miserable of men, and that he would die sooner than have the presumption to hope. Therefore you see, my love, I have sent for you, to give him permission to destroy himself in any way he pleases ; and I leave him to show cause why (it is a fate that sooner or later happens to all his fellow-men) sentence of death should not be passed against him." Having delivered this speech with more propriety of word than usually fell to his share, the squire rose hastily and hobbled out of the room.

Lucy sank into the chair her father had quitted, and Clifford, approaching towards her, said, in a hoarse and low voice,—

"Your father, Miss Brandon, says rightly, that I would die rather than lift my eyes in hope to you. I thought yesterday that I had seen you for the last time ; chance, not my own folly or presumption, has brought me again before you ; and even the few hours I have passed under the same roof with you have made me feel as if my love—my madness—had never reached its height till now. Oh, Lucy !" continued Clifford, in a more impassioned

tone, and, as if by a sudden and irresistible impulse, throwing himself at her feet; "if I *could* hope to merit you—if I could hope to raise myself—if I could—but no—no—no! I am cut off from all hope, and for ever!"

There was so deep, so bitter, so heartfelt an anguish and remorse in the voice with which these last words were spoken, that Lucy, hurried off her guard, and forgetting every thing in wondering sympathy and compassion, answered, extending her hand towards Clifford, who, still kneeling, seized and covered it with kisses of fire,—

"Do not speak thus, Mr. Clifford; do not accuse yourself of what I am sure, quite sure, you cannot deserve. Perhaps,—forgive me,—your birth, your fortune, are beneath your merits; and you have penetrated into my father's weakness on the former point; or, perhaps, you yourself have not avoided all the errors into which men are hurried; perhaps you have been imprudent or thoughtless; perhaps you have (fashion is contagious, played beyond your means, or incurred debts: these are faults, it is true, and to be regretted, yet not surely irreparable."

For that instant can it be wondered that all Clifford's resolution and self-denial deserted him, and lifting his eyes, radiant with joy and gratitude, to the face which bent in benevolent innocence towards him, he exclaimed, "No, Miss Brandon!—no, Lucy!—dear, angel Lucy!—my faults are less venial than these, but perhaps they are no less the consequence of circumstances and contagion; perhaps it may not be too late to repair them. Would you—you indeed deign to be my guardian, I might not despair of being saved!"

"If," said Lucy, blushing deeply, and looking down, while she spoke quick and eagerly, as if to avoid humbling him by her offer,—“if, Mr. Clifford, the want of wealth has in any

way occasioned you uneasiness, or—or error, do believe me—I mean *us*—so much your friends as not for an instant to scruple in relieving us of some little portion of our last night's debt to you."

"Dear, noble girl!" said Clifford, while there writhed upon his lips one of those smiles of powerful sarcasm that sometimes distorted his features, and thrillingly impressed upon Lucy a resemblance to one very different in reputation and character to her lover,—“Do not attribute my misfortunes to so petty a source; it is not money that I shall want while I live, though I shall to my last breath remember this delicacy in you, and compare it with certain base remembrances in my own mind. Yes! all past thoughts and recollections will make me hereafter worship you even more than I do now; while in your heart they will—unless Heaven grant me one prayer—make you scorn and detest me!"

"For mercy's sake do not speak thus!" said Lucy, gazing in indistinct alarm upon the dark and working features of her lover. "Scorn, detest, you! impossible! How could I, after the remembrance of last night!"

"Ay! of last night," said Clifford, speaking through his ground teeth: "there is much in that remembrance to live long in both of us: but you—you—fair angel (and all harshness and irony vanishing at once from his voice and countenance, yielded to a tender and deep sadness, mingled with a respect that bordered on reverence),—"you never could have dreamed of more than pity for one like me,—you never could have stooped from your high and dazzling purity to know for me one such thought as that which burns at my heart for you,—you—yes, withdraw your hand, I am not worthy to touch it!" And clasping his own hands

before his face, he became abruptly silent; but his emotions were but ill concealed, and Lucy saw the muscular frame before her heaved and convulsed by passions which were more intense and rending because it was only for a few moments that they conquered his self-will and struggled into vent.

If after words,—but long afterwards, Lucy, recalling the mystery of his words, confessed to herself that they betrayed pain, she was then too much affected to think of any thing but her love and his emotion. She bent down, and with a gentle and fond self-obliviousness, which none could have resisted, placed both her hands on his. Clifford started, looked up, and in the next moment he had clasped her to his heart; and while the only tears he had shed since his career of crime fell fast and hot upon her countenance, he kissed her forehead, her cheek, her lips, in a passionate and wild transport. His voice died within him, he could not trust himself to speak; only one thought, even in that swelling forgetfulness of her and of himself, started and spoke at his breast.—“*God!*” The more he felt he loved,—the more tender and the more confiding the object of his love, the more urgent became the necessity to leave her. All other duties had been neglected, but he loved with a real love; and love, which taught him one duty, bore him triumphantly through its latter ordeal.

“You will hear from me to-night,” he muttered. “believe that I am mad, accused, criminal, but not actually a monster! I ask no more merciful opinion!” He drew himself from his perilous position, and abruptly departed.

When Clifford reached his home, he found his worthy employers waiting for him with alarm and horror on their countenances. An old coat, in which they had signalled themselves,

had long attracted the rigid attention of the police, and certain officers had now been seen at Bath, and certain inquiries had been set on foot, which portended no good to the safety of the sagacious Tumbinson and the valiant Pepper. They came, humbly and penitentially demanding pardon for their unconscious aggression of the squire's carriage, and entreating their captain's instant advice. If Clifford had before wavered in his disinterested determination,—if visions of Lucy, of happiness, and reform, had floated in his solitary ride too frequently and too glowingly before his eyes, the sight of these men, their conversation, their danger, all sufficed to restore his resolution. “Merciful God!” thought he, “and is it to the comrade of such lawless villains, to a man, like them, exposed hourly to the most ignominious of deaths, that I have for one season of a moment dreamed of consigning the innocent and generous girl, whose trust or love is the only crime that could deprive her of the most brilliant destiny?”

Short were Clifford's instructions to his followers, and so much do we do mechanically, that they were delivered with his usual forethought and precision. “You will leave the town instantly; go not, for your lives, to London, or to regain any of your comrades. Ride for the Red Cave; provisions are stored there, and, since our late alteration of the interior, it will afford ample room to encamp your horses. On the night of the second day from this I will join you. But be sure that you enter the cave at night, and quit it upon no account till I come!”

“Yes!” said he, when he was alone, “I will join you again, but only to quit you. One more offence against the law, or at least one sum wrung from the swollen hands of the rich sufficient to equip me for a foreign army, and I quit the country of my

birth and my crimes. If I cannot forgive Lucy Brandon, I will be somewhat less unworthy. Perhaps (why not?) I am young, my nerves are not weak, my brain is not dull; perhaps I may in some field of honourable adventure win a name, that before my death-bed I may not blush to acknowledge to her!"

While this resolve beat high within Clifford's breast, Lucy sadly and in silence was continuing with the squire her short journey to Bath. The latter was very inquisitive to know why Clifford had gone, and what he had avowed; and Lucy, scarcely able to answer, threw every thing on the promised letter of the night.

"I am glad," muttered the squire to her, "that he is going to write; for, somehow or other, though I questioned him very tightly, he slipped through my cross-examination, and bursting out at once as to his love for you, left me as wise about himself as I was before; no doubt (for my own part I don't see what should prevent his being a great man *enough*.) this letter will explain all!"

Late that night the letter came; Lucy, fortunately for her, was alone in her own room; she opened it, and read as follows:—

CLIFFORD'S LETTER.

"I have promised to write to you, and I sit down to perform that promise. At this moment the recollection of your goodness, your generous consideration, is warm within me; and while I must choose calm and common words to express what I ought to say, my heart is alternately melted and torn by thoughts which would ask words, oh how different! Your father has questioned me often of my parentage and birth,—I have hitherto eluded his interrogatories. Learn now who I am. In a wretched abode, surrounded by the inhabitants of poverty and vice, I recall my earliest recollections.

My father is unknown to me as to every one; my mother, to you I dare not mention who or what she was,—she died in my infancy. Without a name, but not without an inheritance (my inheritance was large—it was infamy!), I was thrown upon the world: I had received by accident some education, and imbibed some ideas, not natural to my situation; since then I have played many parts in life: books and men I have not so neglected, but that I have gleaned at intervals some little knowledge from both. Hence, if I have seemed to you better than I am, you will perceive the cause: circumstances made me soon my own master; they made me also one whom honest men do not love to look upon; my deeds have been, and my character is, of a par with my birth and my fortunes. I came, in the noble hope to raise and redeem myself by gilding my fate with a wealthy marriage, to this city: I saw you, whom I had once before met. I heard you were rich. Hate me, Miss Brandon, hate me!—I resolved to make your ruin the cause of my redemption. Happily for you, I scarcely knew you before I loved you; that love deepened,—it caught something pure and elevated from yourself. My resolution forsook me; even now I could throw myself on my knees and thank God that you—you, dearest and noblest of human beings—are not my wife. Now, is my conduct clear to you?—If not, imagine me all that is villanous, save in one point, where you are concerned, and not a shadow of mystery will remain. Your kind father, over-rating the paltry service I rendered you, would have consented to submit my fate to your decision. I blush indignantly for him—for you—that any living man should have dreamed of such profanation for Miss Brandon. Yet I myself was carried away and intoxicated by so sudden and so soft a hope—even I

dared to lift my eyes to you, to press you to this guilty heart, to forget myself and to dream that you might be mine! Can you forgive me for this madness? And hereafter, when in your holy and glittering sphere of wondrous happiness, can you remember me, presumption and cheek your words? Perhaps you think that by so late a confession I have already deceived you. Alas! you know not what it costs me now to confess! I had only one hope in life,—it was that you might still, long after you had ceased to see me, fancy me not utterly beneath the herd with whom you live. This burning yet selfish vanity I tear from me, and now I go where no hope can pursue me. No hope for myself, save one which can hardly deserve the name, for it is rather a rude and visionary wish than an expectation:—it is, that under another name, and under different aspects, you may hear of me at some future time; and when I apprise you that under that name you may recognize and who loves you better than all created things, you may feel then, at least, no cause for shame at your hour. What will you be then? A happy wife—a mother—the centre of a thousand joys—beloved, admired—loved when the eye sees you and the ear hears! And this is what I ought to hope:—this is the consolation that ought to cheer me;—perhaps a little more honest it will. Not that I shall love you less, but that I shall love you less narrowly, and therefore less selfishly. I have now written to you all that it becomes you to remove from me. My heart wants below to hear me from this city, and far ever from your vicinity. For ever—say, you are the only blessing *for ever* for I bid me. Wealth I may gain—a fair name—even glory I may perhaps expect to! to Heaven itself I may find a path; but of *you* my very dreams cannot give me the shadow of

a hope. I do not say, if you could pierce my soul while I write that you would pity me. You may think it strange, but I would not have your pity for worlds: I think I would even rather have your hate, pity seems so much like contempt. But if you knew what an effort has enabled me to tame down my language, to curb my thoughts, to prevent me from embodying that which now makes my brain whirl, and my hand feel as if the living fire consumed it, if you knew what has enabled me to triumph over the madness at my heart, and spare you what, if writ or spoken, would seem like the ravings of insanity, you would not, and you could not, despise me, though you might abhor.

"And now, Heaven guard and bless you! Nothing on *earth* could injure you. And even the wicked who have looked upon you learn to pray—I have prayed for you!"

Thus abrupt and signatureless ended the expected letter. Lucy came down the next morning at her usual hour, and, except that she was very pale, nothing in her appearance seemed to announce past grief or emotion. The squire asked her if she had received the promised letter? She answered in a clear though faint voice, that she had:—that Mr. Clifford had confessed himself of too low an origin to hope for marriage with Mr. Brandon's family, that she trusted the squire would keep his secret, and that the subject might never again be alluded to by either. If, in this speech, there was something alien to Lucy's ingenuous character, and painful to her mind, she felt it, as it were, a duty to her former lover not to betray the whole of that confession so bitterly wrong from him. Perhaps, too, there was in that letter a claim which seemed to her too sacred to be revealed to any one. And mysterious

were not excluded even from a love so ill-placed, and seemingly so transitory, as hers.

Lucy's answer touched the squire in his weak point. "A man of decidedly low origin," he confessed, "was utterly out of the question; nevertheless the young man showed a great deal of candour in his disclosure." He readily promised never to broach a subject necessarily so unpleasant; and though he sighed as he finished his speech, yet the extreme

quiet of Lucy's manner reassured him; and when he perceived that she resumed, though languidly, her wonted avocations, he felt but little doubt of her soon overcoming the remembrance of what, he hoped, was but a girlish and fleeting fancy. He yielded, with avidity, to her proposal to return to Warlock; and in the same week as that in which Lucy had received her lover's mysterious letter, the father and daughter commenced their journey home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Butler. What are these, sir?

Yeoman. And of what nature—to what use?

Latrec. Imagine."

The Tragedy of Rollo.

"Quickly. He's in Arthur's bosom, if ever man went to Arthur's bosom."—*Henry V.*

THE stream of our narrative now conducts us back to William Brandon. The law-promotions previously intended were completed; and, to the surprise of the public, the envied barrister, undergoing the degradation of knighthood, had, at the time we return to him, just changed his toilsome occupations for the serene dignity of the bench. Whatever regret this wily and aspiring schemer might otherwise have felt at an elevation considerably less distinguished than he might reasonably have expected, was entirely removed by the hopes afforded to him of a speedy translation to a more brilliant office: it was whispered among those not unlikely to foresee such events, that the interest of the government required his talents in the house of peers. Just at this moment, too, the fell disease, whose ravages Brandon endeavoured, as jealously as possible, to hide from the public, had appeared suddenly to yield to the skill of a new physician; and by the administration of medi-

cines, which a man less stern or resolute might have trembled to adopt (so powerful, and for the most part, deadly was their nature), he passed from a state of almost insufferable torture to an elysium of tranquillity and ease: perhaps, however, the medicines which altered also decayed his constitution: and it was observable, that in two cases, where the physician had attained a like success by the same means, the patients had died suddenly, exactly at the time when their cure seemed to be finally completed. However, Sir William Brandon appeared very little anticipative of danger. His manner became more cheerful and even than it had ever been before; there was a certain lightness in his gait, a certain exhilaration in his voice and eye, which seemed the tokens of one from whom a heavy burden had been suddenly raised, and who was no longer prevented from the eagerness of hope by the engrossing claims of a bodily pain. He had always been bland in

co-sist, but now his courtesy breathed less of artifice,—it took a more hearty tone. Another alteration was discernible in him, and that was precisely the reverse of what might have been expected. He became more *thrifty*—more attentive to the expenses of life than he had been. Though a despiser of show and ostentation, and far too *humbly* to be luxurious, he was too scientific an architect of the weaknesses of others not to have maintained during his public career a splendid appearance and a hospitable table. The profession he had adopted requires, perhaps, less of externals to aid it than any other; still Brandon had affected to preserve parliamentary as well as legal importance; and, though his house was situated in a quarter entirely professional, he had been accustomed to surround his hospitable board all who were eminent, in his political party, for rank or for talent. Now, however, when hospitality, and a certain largeness of expenses, better became his station, he grew closer and more exact in his economy. Brandon never could have degenerated into a miser; money, to one so habitually wise as he was, could never have passed from means into an end; but he had, evidently, for some cause or another, formed the resolution to save. Some said it was the result of returning health, and the hope of a prolonged life, to which ready subjects for which wealth is destined might occur. But when it was accidentally ascertained that Brandon had been making several inquiries respecting a large estate in the neighbourhood of Warlock, formerly in the possession of his family, the gossips (as Brandon was a man to be gossiped about) were no longer in want of a motive, false or real, for the judge's thrift.

It was shortly after his elevation to the bench, and ere these signs of

change had become noticeable, that the same strange ragamuffin whom we have mentioned before, as introduced by Mr Swappin to a private conference with Brandon, was admitted to the judge's presence.

"Well," said Brandon, impatiently, the moment the door was closed, "your news?"

"Vy, your onor," said the man, bashfully, twirling a thing that stood proxy for a hat, "I thinks as ow I shall be ble to satisfy your vorship's onor." Then approaching the judge, and assuming an important air, he whispered, —

"Tis as ow I thought."

"My God!" cried Brandon, with vehemence. "And he is alive!—and where?"

"I believes," answered the seemingly confident of Sir William Brandon, "that he be's alive; and if he be's alive, may I flash my ivories in a glass case, if I does not ferret him out; but as to saying where he be at this nick o' the moment, smash me if I can."

"Is he in this country?" said Brandon; "or do you believe that he has gone abroad?"

"Vy, much of one and not a little of the other!" said the euphonious confident.

"How! speak plain, man—what do you mean?"

"Vy, I means, your onor, that I can't say where he is."

"And this," said Brandon, with a muttered oath,—"this is your boasted news, is it! Dog! damned, damned dog! if you trifle with me, or play me false, I will hang you,—by the living God, I will!"

The man shrunk back involuntarily from Brandon's vindictive forehead and kindled eyes; but with the cunning peculiar to low vice answered, though in a humbler tone, —

"And yet good vill that do your onor! If so be as ow you scrags I,

will that put your worship in the way of finding *he*?"

Never was there an obstacle in grammar through which a sturdy truth could not break; and Brandon, after a moody pause, said in a milder voice,—“I did not mean to frighten you! Never mind what I said; but you can surely guess whereabouts he is, or what means of life he pursues? perhaps”—and a momentary paleness crossed Brandon’s swarthy visage:—“perhaps he may have been driven into dishonesty in order to maintain himself!”

The informant replied with great *naïveté*, that “such a thing was not impossible!” And Brandon then entered into a series of seemingly careless but artful cross-questionings, which either the ignorance or the craft of the man enabled him to baffle. After some time, Brandon, disappointed and dissatisfied, gave up his professional task; and, bestowing on the man many sagacious and minute instructions, as well as a very liberal donation, he was forced to dismiss his mysterious visitor, and to content himself with an assured assertion, that if the object of his inquiries should not already be gone to the devil, the strange gentleman employed to discover him would certainly, sooner or later, bring him to the judge.

This assertion, and the interview preceding it, certainly inspired Sir William Brandon with a feeling like complacency, although it was mingled with a considerable alloy.

“I do not,” thought he, concluding his meditations when he was left alone,—“I do not see what else I can do! Since it appears that the boy had not even a name when he set out alone from his wretched abode, I fear that an advertisement would have but little chance of even designating, much less of finding him, after so long an absence. Besides, it might make me the prey to impostors; and,

in all probability, he has either left the country, or adopted some mode of living which would prevent his daring to disclose himself!” This thought plunged the soliloquist into a gloomy abstraction, which lasted several minutes, and from which he started, muttering aloud,—

“Yes, yes! I dare to believe, to hope it.—Now for the minister, and the peerage!” And from that time the root of Sir William Brandon’s ambition spread with a firmer and more extended grasp over his mind.

We grieve very much that the course of our story should now oblige us to record an event which we would willingly have spared ourselves the pain of narrating. The good old Squire of Warlock Manor-house had scarcely reached his home on his return from Bath, before William Brandon received the following letter from his brother’s grey-headed butler:—

“HONNURED SUR,

“I send this with all speeds, thof with a hevy hart, to axquainte you with the sudden (and it is feared by his loving friends and well-wishers, which latter, to be sur, is all as knows him) dangerous illness of the Squire.* He was seized, poor deer gentleman (for God never made a better, no offence to your Honnour), the moment he set footing in his Own Hall, and what has hung rond me like a mill-ston ever sin, is that instead of his saying,—‘How do you do, Sampson!’ as was his wont, whenever he returned from forren parts, sich as Bath, Lunnon, and the like; he said, ‘God bleas you, Sampson!’ which makes me think sumhow that it will be his last

* The reader, who has doubtless noticed how invariably servants of long standing acquire a certain tone from that of their master, may observe that honest John Sampson had caught from the squire the habit of parenthetical composition.

words, for he has never spoke sin, for all Miss Lucy be by his bedside continued. "She, poor dear, don't take on at all in regard of crying and such notions were, but looks nevertheless, for all she would, just like a corpse. I sends Tom the position with this heapness, knowing he is a good hand at a gossip, having, not sixteen years ago, beat some of the best on an at a racing. Hoping as yer honnur will lose no time in coming to this 'house of mourning."

"I remane, with all respect,

"Your Honnur's humble servant
to command,

"JOHN SAMSON."

Sir William Brandon did not give himself time to reread this letter, in order to make it more intelligible, before he wrote to one of his professional composers, requesting him to fill his place during his unavoidable absence, on the melancholy occasion of his brother's expected death; and having so done, he immediately set off for Warwick. Inexplicable even to himself was that feeling, so nearly approaching to real sorrow, which the worldly keeper felt at the prospect of losing his galleons and unexpanding treasure. Whether it be that turbulent and ambitious minds in choosing for their wandering attentions the very opposites of themselves feel (on losing the fellowship of those calm, fair characters that have never crossed their rugged path) as if they lost, in losing them, a kind of haven for their own restless thoughts and tempestuous designs—be this as it may, certain it is, that when William Brandon arrived at his brother's door, and was welcomed by the old butler, who, for the first time, was slow to greet him, that the square had just breathed his last, his austere nature forsook him at once, and he felt the shock with a severity perhaps still keener than that

which a more genial and affectionate heart would have experienced.

As soon as he had recovered his self-possession, Sir William made question of his nose, and finding that after an unrelaxing watch during the whole of the square's brief illness, nature had failed her at his death, and she had been borne senseless from his chamber to her own, Brandon walked with a step far different from his usual stately gait to the room where his brother lay. It was one of the oldest apartments in the house, and much of the ancient splendour that belonged to the mansion ere its size had been reduced, with the fortunes of its successive owners, still distinguished the chamber. The huge mantel piece ascending to the carved ceiling in grotesque pilasters, and scroll-work of the blackest oak, with the quartered arms of Brandon and Saville encircled in the centre,—the panelled walls of the same dark wainscot,—the *gruesome* of ebony,—the high-backed chairs, with their tapestried seats,—the lofty bed, with its horse-like plumes and draperies of a crimson damask that seemed, so massy was the substance, and so prominent the flowers, as if it were rather a carving than a silk,—all conspired with the size of the room to give it a feudal solemnity, not perhaps suited to the rest of the house, but well calculated to strike a gloomy awe into the breast of the worldly and proud man who now entered the death chamber of his brother.

Shortly William Brandon motioned away the attendants, and silently he seated himself by the bed, and looked long and wistfully upon the calm and placid face of the deceased. It is difficult to guess at what passed within him during the space of time in which he remained alone in that room. The apartment itself he could not, at another period, have tenanted without secret emotion. It was that in which,

as a boy, he had himself been accustomed to sleep; and, even then a schemer and an aspirant, the very sight of the room sufficed to call back all the hopes and visions, the restless projects and the feverish desires, which had now brought him to the envied state of an acknowledged celebrity and a shattered frame. There must have been something awful in the combination of those active remembrances with the cause which had led him to that apartment; and there was a homily in the serene countenance of the dead, which preached more effectually to the heart of the living than William Brandon would ever have cared to own. He had been more than an hour in the room, and

the evening had already begun to cast deep shadows through the small panes of the half-closed window, when Brandon was startled by a slight noise. He looked up, and beheld Lucy opposite to him. She did not see him; but throwing herself upon the bed, she took the cold hand of the deceased, and, after a long silence, burst into a passion of tears.

"My father!" she sobbed,—“my kind, good father! who will love me now?”

"I!" said Brandon, deeply affected; and, passing round the bed, he took his niece in his arms: "I will be your father, Lucy, and you—the last of our race—shall be to me as a daughter!"

CHAPTER XXV.

"Falsehood in him was not the useless lie
Of boasting pride or laughing vanity;
It was the gainful—the persuading art," &c.

CRANE.

"On with the horses—off to Canterbury,
Tramp—tramp o'er pebble, and splash—splash thro' puddle;
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!

' Here laws are all inviolate; none lay
Traps for the traveller; every highway's clear;
Here —— he was interrupted by a knife,
With 'D—— your eyes!—your money or your life!'"

Don Juan.

MISFORTUNES are like the creations of Cadmus—they destroy one another! Roused from the torpor of mind occasioned by the loss of her lover at the sudden illness of the squire, Lucy had no thought for herself—no thought for any one—for any thing but her father, till long after the earth had closed over his remains. The very activity of the latter grief was less dangerous than the quiet of the former; and when the first keenness

of sorrow passed away, and her mind gradually and mechanically returned to the remembrance of Clifford, it was with an intensity less strong, and less fatal to her health and happiness than before. She thought it unnatural and criminal to allow any thing else to grieve her, while she had so sacred a grief as that of her loss; and her mind, once aroused into resistance to passion, betrayed a native strength little to have been expected from her apparent

character. Sir William Brandon lost no time in returning to town after the burial of his brother. He insisted upon taking his niece with him; and, though, with real reluctance, she yielded to his wishes, and accompanied him. By the squire's will, indeed, Sir William was appointed guardian to Lucy, and she yet wanted more than a year of her majority.

Brandon, with a delicacy very uncommon to him, where women were, was a confirmed woman-hater; none concerned, provided every thing that he thought could in any way conduce to her comfort. He ordered it to be understood in his establishment that she was his mistress. He arranged and furnished, according to what he imagined to be her taste, a suite of apartments for her sole accommodation; a separate carriage and servants were appropriated to her use; and he sought, by perpetual presents of books, or flowers, or music, to occupy her thoughts, and atone for the solitude to which his professional duties obliged him so constantly to consign her. These attentions, which showed this strange man in a new light, seemed to bring out many little latent inclinations, which were usually subdued in the cultivation of his rocky nature; and, even despite her causes for grief and one deep melancholy which consumed her, Lucy was touched with gratitude at kindnesses hardly anything in our age, however sincere and polished, can be so warmly welcomed to the little graces that are considered as gratifying to women; and yet for whom they so often danger, while they like him who affords them. There was much in Brandon that wound itself powerfully round the heart. To one more experienced than Lucy, this involuntary attraction might not have been incompatible with suspicion, and could scarcely have been associated with esteem; and yet for all who

knew him intimately, even for the penetrating and selfish Manneverer, the attraction existed unprincipled, crafty, hypocritical, even base when it suited his purpose, secretly sneering at the dupes he made, and knowing no code save that of interest and ambition; viewing men only as machines, and opinions only as ladders,—there was yet a tone of powerful feeling sometimes elicited from a heart that could at the same moment have sacrificed a whole people to the pettiest personal object; and sometimes with Lucy the eloquence or irony of his conversation deepened into a melancholy—a half-suppressed gentleness of sentiment, that accorded with the state of *her own* mind and interested *her kind feelings powerfully in his*. It was these peculiarities in his converse which made Lucy love to hear him; and she gradually learned to anticipate with a gloomy pleasure the hour in which, after the occupations of the day, he was accustomed to join her.

"You look unwell, uncle, to night," she said, when one evening he entered the room with looks more fatigued than usual; and, rising, she leaned tenderly over him, and kissed his forehead.

"Ay!" said Brandon, utterly unwon by, and even unheeding, the caress, "our way of life soon passes into the sea and yellow leaf; and when Macbeth grieved that he might not look to have that which should accompany old age, he had grown dotting, and grieved for what was worthless."

"Nay, uncle, 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,—these surely were worth the sighing for!'"

"Push! not worth a single sigh! The foolish wishes we form in youth have something noble, and something bodily in them; but those of age are either shadows, and the shadows of paganism! Why, what is honour, after all? What is this good name among men? Only a sort of heathenish idol,

set up to be adored by one set of fools, and scorned by another. Do you not observe, Lucy, that the man you hear most praised by the party you meet to-day, is most abused by that which you meet to-morrow? Public men are only praised by their party; and their party, sweet Lucy, are such base minions, that it moves one's spleen to think one is so little as to be useful to them. Thus a good name is only the good name of a sect, and the members of that sect are only marvellous proper knaves."

"But posterity does justice to those who really deserve fame."

"Posterity! Can you believe that a man who knows what life is, cares for the penny whistles of grown children after his death? Posterity, Lucy—no! Posterity is but the same perpetuity of fools and rascals; and even were justice describable at their hands, they could *not* deal it. Do men agree whether Charles Stuart was a liar or a martyr? For how many ages have we believed Nero a monster! A writer now asks, as if demonstrating a problem, what real historian could doubt that Nero was a paragon! The patriarchs of Scripture have been declared by modern philosophy to be a series of astronomical hieroglyphs; and, with greater show of truth, we are assured that the patriot Tell never existed! Posterity! the word has galled men enough without *my* adding to the number. I, who loathe the living, can scarcely venerate the unborn. Lucy, believe me, that no man can mix largely with men in political life, and not despise every thing that in youth he adored! Age leaves us only one feeling—contempt!"

"Are you belied, then?" said Lucy, pointing to a newspaper, the organ of the party opposed to Brandon: "Are you belied when you are here called 'ambitious?' When they call you 'selfish' and 'grasping' I know they wrong you; but I confess that I

have thought you ambitious; yet can he who despises men desire their good opinion?"

"Their good opinion!" repeated Brandon, mockingly: "Do we want the bray of the asses we ride!—No!" he resumed, after a pause. "It is *power*, not *honour*; it is the hope of elevating oneself in every respect, in the world without, as well as in the world of one's own mind. It is this hope which makes me labour where I might rest, and will continue the labour to my grave. Lucy," continued Brandon, fixing his keen eyes on his niece, "have you no ambition? have power, and pomp, and place, no charm for your mind?"

"None!" said Lucy, quietly and simply.

"Indeed! yet there are times when I have thought I recognised my blood in your veins. You are sprung from a once noble, but a fallen race. Are you ever susceptible to the weakness of ancestral pride?"

"You say," answered Lucy, "that we should care not for those who live after us; much less, I imagine, should we care for those who have lived ages before!"

"Prettily answered," said Brandon, smiling. "I will tell you at one time or another what effect that weakness you despise already once had, long after your age, upon me. You are early wise on some points—profit by my experience, and be so on *all*."

"That is to say, in despising all men and all things!" said Lucy, also smiling.

"Well, never mind my creed; you may be wise after your own: but trust me, dearest Lucy, who loves you purely and disinterestedly, and who has weighed with scales balanced to a hair all the advantages to be gleaned from an earth, in which I verily think the harvest was gathered before we were put into it;—trust me, Lucy, and never think love—that maiden's

dream—so valuable as rank and power! please well before you yield to the former—accept the latter the moment they are offered you. Love puts you at the feet of another, and that other a tyrant; rank puts others at your feet, and all those thus subjugated are your slaves!”

Lucy moved her chair (so that the new position concealed her face) and did not answer; and Brandon, in an affixed tone, continued, —

“Would you think, Lucy, that I once was fool enough to imagine that love was a blessing, and to be eagerly sought for? I gave up my hopes, my chances of wealth, of distinction, all that had burned from the years of boyhood into my very heart. I chose poverty, obscurity, humiliation, — but I chose also love. What was my reward? Lucy Brandon, I was deceived — deceived!”

Brandon paused, and Lucy took his hand affectionately, but did not break the silence. Brandon resumed: —

“Yes, I was deceived! But I in my turn had a revenge, — and a fitting revenge; for it was not the revenge of hatred, but” — and the speaker laughed scornfully — “of contempt. Enough of this, Lucy! What I wished to say to you is this: — grown men and women know more of the truth of things than ye young persons think for. Love is a mere bubble, and no human being ever exchanged for it one solid advantage without repentance. Believe this, and if mark ever puts itself under those pretty feet, be sure not to spurn the immortal!”

So saying, with a slight laugh, Brandon lighted his chamber candle, and left the room for the night.

As soon as the lawyer reached his own apartment, he indited to Lord Mauleverer the following epistle: —

“Why, dear Mauleverer, do you not come to town? I want you — your party wants you; perhaps the King wants you; and certainly, if

you are serious about my niece, the care of your own love-suit should induce you yourself to want to come hither. I have paved the way for you; and I think, with a little management, you may anticipate a speedy success; but Lucy is a strange girl; and perhaps, after all, though you ought to be on the spot, you had better leave her as much as possible in my hands. I know human nature, Mauleverer, and that knowledge is the engine by which I will work your triumph. As for the young lover, I am not quite sure whether it be not better for our sake that Lucy should have experienced a disappointment on that score; for when a woman has once loved, and the love is utterly hopeless, she puts all vague ideas of other lovers altogether out of her head; she becomes contented with a husband *whom she can esteem*! Sweet center! But *you*, Mauleverer, want Lucy to love you! And so she will — after you have married her! She will love you partly from the advantages she derives from you, partly from familiarity (to say nothing of your good qualities). For my part, I think domesticity goes so far, that I believe a woman always inclined to be affectionate to a man whom she has once seen in his nightcap. However, you should come to town; my poor brother's recent death allows us to see no one, — the coast will be clear from rivals; grief has softened my niece's heart, — in a word, you could not have a better opportunity. Come!”

“By the way, you say one of the reasons which made you think ill of this Captain Clifford was, your impression that, in the figure of one of his associates, you recognised something that appeared to you to resemble one of the fellows who robbed you a few months ago. I understand that, at this moment, the police are in active pursuit of three most accomplished robbers; nor should I be at all

surprised if in this very Clifford were to be found the leader of the gang, viz. the notorious Lovett. I hear that the said leader is a clever and a handsome fellow, of a gentlemanlike address, and that his general associates are two men of the exact stamp of the worthies you have so amusingly described to me. I heard this yesterday from Nabhem, the police-officer, with whom I once scraped acquaintance on a trial; and in my grudge against your rival, I hinted at my suspicion that he, Captain Clifford, might not impossibly prove this Rinaldo Rinaldini of the roads. Nabhem caught at my hint at once; so that, if it be founded on a true guess, I may flatter my conscience, as well as my friendship, by the hope that I have had some hand in hanging this Adonis of my niece's. Whether my guess be true or not, Nabhem says he is sure of this Lovett; for one of his gang has promised to betray him. Hang these aspiring dogs! I thought treachery was confined to politics; and that thought makes me turn to public matters,—in which all people are turning with the most edifying celerity."

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Sir William Brandon's epistle found Mauleverer in a fitting mood for Lucy and for London. Our worthy peer had been not a little chagrined by Lucy's sudden departure from Bath; and while in doubt whether or not to follow her, the papers had informed him of the squire's death. Mauleverer, being then fully aware of the impossibility of immediately urging his suit, endeavoured, like the true philosopher he was, to reconcile himself to his hope deferred. Few people were more easily susceptible of consolation than Lord Mauleverer. He found an agreeable lady, of a face more unfaded than her reputation, to whom he

intrusted the care of relieving his leisure moments from *ennui*; and being a lively woman, the *confidante* discharged the trust with great satisfaction to Lord Mauleverer, for the space of a fortnight, so that he naturally began to feel his love for Lucy gradually wearing away, by absence and other ties; but just as the triumph of time over passion was growing decisive, the lady left Bath in company with a tall guardman, and Mauleverer received Brandon's letter. These two events recalled our excellent lover to a sense of his allegiance; and there being now at Bath no particular attraction to counterbalance the ardour of his affection, Lord Mauleverer ordered the horses to his carriage, and, attended only by his valet, set out for London.

Nothing, perhaps, could convey a better portrait of the world's spoiled darling than a sight of Lord Mauleverer's thin, fastidious features, peering forth through the closed window of his luxurious travelling chariot; the rest of the outer man being carefully enveloped in furs, half-a-dozen novels strewing the seat of the carriage, and a lean French dog, exceedingly like its master, sniffing in vain for the fresh air, which, to the imagination of Mauleverer, was peopled with all sorts of asthmas and catarrhs! Mauleverer got out of his carriage at Salisbury, to stretch his limbs, and to amuse himself with a cutlet. Our nobleman was well known on the roads; and, as nobody could be more affable, he was equally popular. The officious landlord bustled into the room, to wait himself upon his lordship, and to tell all the news of the place.

"Well, Mr. Cheerly," said Mauleverer, bestowing a penetrating glance on his cutlet, "the bad times, I see, have not ruined your cook."

"Indeed, my lord, your lordship is very good, and the times, indeed, are very bad—very bad indeed. Is there

enough gravy! Perhaps your lordship will try the pickled onions!"

"The what? Onions!—oh!—ah! nothing can be better; but I never touch them. So, are the roads good?"

"Your lordship has, I hope, found them good to Salisbury?"

"Ah! I believe so. Oh! to be sure, excellent to Salisbury. But how are they to London? We have had wet weather lately, I think!"

"No, my lord. *Here*, the weather has been as dry as a bone."

"Or a outlet?" muttered Mauleverer, and the host continued,—

"As for the roads themselves, my lord—so far as the roads are concerned—they are pretty good, my lord; but I can't say as how there is not something about them that might be mended."

"By no means improbable!—You mean the lanes and the turnpikes?" rejoined Mauleverer.

"Your lordship is pleased to be facetious, no? I meant something worse than that."

"What? the docks?"

"No, my lord,—the highwaymen!"

"The highwaymen?—indeed!" said Mauleverer anxiously; for he had with him a mass of diamonds, which at that time were, on grand occasions, often the ornaments of a gentleman's dress, in the shape of buttons, buckles, &c.; he had also a tolerably large sum of ready money about him, a blessing he had lately begun to find very rare.—"By the way, the rascals robbed me before on this very road. My pistols shall be loaded this time.—Mr. Cheerly, you had better order the horses; one may as well escape the night-fall."

"Certainly, my lord—certainly.—Jen, the horses immediately!—Your lordship will have another outlet!"

"Not a mortal!"

"A fort!"

"A dev—! not for the world!"

"Believe the ghost, Jen!"

"Much obliged to you, Mr. Cheerly,

but I have dined; and if I have not done justice to your good cheer, thank yourself and the highwaymen.—Where do these highwaymen attack one?"

"Why, my lord, the neighbourhood of Reading is, I believe, the worst part, but they are very troublesome all the way to Salthill."

"Damnation!—the very neighbourhood in which the knaves robbed me before!—You may well call them *troublesome*! Why the deuce don't the police clear the county of such a movable species of trouble?"

"Indeed, my lord, I don't know; but they say as how Captain Lovett, the famous robber, be one of the set; and nobody can catch him, I fear!"

"Because, I suppose, the dog has the sense to bribe as well as bully.—What is the general number of these ruffians?"

"Why, my lord, sometimes one, sometimes two, but seldom more than three."

Mauleverer drew himself up. "My dear diamonds, and my pretty purse!" thought he; "I may save you yet!"

"Have you been long plagued with the fellows?" he asked, after a pause, as he was paying his bill.

"Why, my lord, we have and we have not. I fancy as how they have a sort of haunt near Reading, for sometimes they are intolerable just about there, and sometimes they are quiet for months together! For instance, my lord, we thought them all gone some time ago; but lately they have regularly stopped every one, though I hear as how they have cleared no great booty as yet."

Here the waiter announced the horses, and Mauleverer slowly re-entered his carriage, among the bows and smiles of the charmed spirits of the hostelry.

During the daylight, Mauleverer, who was naturally of a gallant and fearless temper, thought no more of

the highwaymen,—a species of danger so common at that time, that men almost considered it disgraceful to suffer the dread of it to be a cause of delay on the road. Travellers seldom deemed it best to lose time in order to save money; and they carried with them a stout heart and a brace of pistols, instead of sleeping all night on the road. Mauleverer, rather a *preux chevalier*, was precisely of this order of wayfarers; and a night at an inn, when it was possible to avoid it, was to him, as to most rich Englishmen, a tedious torture zealously to be shunned. It never, therefore, entered into the head of our excellent nobleman, despite his experience, that his diamonds and his purse might be saved from all danger, if he would consent to deposit them, with his own person, at some place of hospitable reception; nor, indeed, was it till he was within a stage of Reading, and the twilight had entirely closed in, that he troubled his head much on the matter. But while the horses were putting to, he summoned the postboys to him; and, after regarding their countenances with the eye of a man accustomed to read physiognomies, he thus eloquently addressed them:—

"Gentlemen,—I am informed that there is some danger of being robbed between this town and Salthill. Now, I beg to inform you, that I think it next to impossible for four horses, properly directed, to be stopped by less than four men. To that number I shall probably yield; to a less number I shall most assuredly give nothing but bullets. You understand me?"

The postboys grinned, touched their hats, and Mauleverer slowly continued,—

"If, therefore,—mark me!—one, two, or three men stop your horses, and I find that the use of your whips and spurs are ineffectual in releasing

the animals from the hold of the robbers, I intend with these pistols—you observe them!—to shoot at the gentlemen who detain you; but as, though I am generally a dead shot, my eyesight wavers a little in the dark, I think it very possible that I may have the misfortune to shoot you, gentlemen, instead of the robbers! You see the rascals will be close by you, sufficiently so to put you in jeopardy, unless, indeed, you knock them down with the butt-end of your whips. I merely mention this, that you may be prepared. Should such a mistake occur, you need not be uneasy beforehand, for I will take every possible care of your widows; should it not, and should we reach Salthill in safety, I intend to testify my sense of the excellence of your driving by a present of ten guineas a-piece! Gentlemen, I have done with you. I give you my honour, that I am serious in what I have said to you. Do me the favour to mount."

Mauleverer then called his favourite servant, who sat in the dickey in front (rubble tumblers not being then in use).

"Smoothson," said he, "the last time we were attacked on this very road, you behaved damnably. See that you do better this time, or it may be the worse for you. You have pistols to-night about you, eh? Well! that's right! And you are sure they're loaded? Very well! Now, then, if we are stopped, don't lose a moment. Jump down, and fire one of your pistols at the first robber. Keep the other for a *sure* aim. One shot is to intimidate, the second to slay. You comprehend? *My* pistols are in excellent order, I suppose. Lend me the ramrod. So, so! No trick this time!"

"They would kill a fly, my lord, provided your lordship fired straight upon it."

"I do not doubt you," said Maule

erer; "light the lanterns, and tell the postboys to drive on."

It was a frosty and tolerably clear night. The dusk of the twilight had melted away beneath the moon which had just risen, and the hoary rime glittered from the bushes and the eaves, breaking into a thousand diamonds as it caught the rays of the stars. On went the horses briskly, their breath steaming against the fresh air, and their hoofs sounding cheerily on the hard ground. The rapid motion of the carriage—the bounding coolness of the night—and the excitement occasioned by anxiety and the forethought of danger, all conspired to stir the languid blood of Lord Mauleverer into a vigorous and exhilarated sensation, natural in youth to his character, but utterly contrary to the nature he had inherited from the customs of his manhood.

He felt his pistols, and his hands trembled a little as he did so—not the least from fear, but from that restlessness and eagerness peculiar to nervous persons placed in a new situation.

"In this country," said he to himself, "I have been only once rebuffed in the course of my life. It was then a little my fault; for before I took to my pistols, I should have been certain they were loaded. To-night, I shall be sure to avoid a similar blunder; and my pistols have an eloquence in their barrels which is exceedingly moving. Huzza, another milestone! There follows drive well; but we are entering a pretty looking spot for Mauleverer the disciple of Robin Hood."

It was, indeed, a picturesque spot by which the carriage was now rapidly whirling. A few miles from Maidenhead, on the Henley Road, our readers will probably remember a small tract of forest-like land, lying on either side of the road. To the left, the green waste bears away among trees and

bushes; and one skilled in the country may pass from that spot, through a landscape as little tenanted as green Sherwood was formerly, into the chains of wild common and deep beech-woods which border a certain portion of Oxfordshire, and contrast so beautifully the general characteristics of that county.

At the time we speak of, the country was even far wilder than it is now; and just on that point where the Henley and the Reading roads unite was a spot (communicating then with the waste land we have described), than which, perhaps, few places could be more adapted to the purposes of such true men as have recourse to the primary law of nature. Certain it was that at this part of the road Mauleverer looked more anxiously from his window than he had hitherto done, and apparently the increased earnestness of his survey was not altogether without meeting its reward.

About a hundred yards to the left, three dark objects were just discernible in the shade; a moment more, and the objects emerging grew into the forms of three men, well mounted, and riding at a brisk trot.

"Only three!" thought Mauleverer, "that is well," and leaning from the front window with a pistol in either hand, Mauleverer cried out to the postboys in a stern tone, "Drive on, and recollect what I told you!—Remember!" he added to his servant. The postboys scarcely looked round; but their spurs were buried in their horses, and the animals flew on like lightning.

The three strangers made a halt, as if in conference; their decision was prompt. Two wheeled round from their comrade, and darted at full gallop by the carriage. Mauleverer's pistol was already protruded from the front window, when to his astonishment, and to the utter baffling of his ingenious admonition to his drivers,

he beheld the two postboys knocked from their horses one after the other with a celerity that scarcely allowed him an exclamation: and before he had recovered his self-possession, the horses taking fright (and their fright being skilfully taken advantage of by the highwaymen), the carriage was fairly whirled into a ditch on the right side of the road, and upset. Meanwhile, Smoothson had leaped from his station in the front; and having fired, though without effect, at the third robber, who approached menacingly towards him, he gained time to open the carriage door, and extricate his master.

The moment Mauleverer found himself on *terra firma*, he prepared his courage for offensive measures, and he and Smoothson standing side by side in front of the unfortunate vehicle, presented no unformidable aspect to the enemy. The two robbers who had so decisively rid themselves of the postboys acted with no less determination towards the horses. One of them dismounted, cut the traces, and suffered the plunging quadrupeds to go whither they listed. This measure was not, however, allowed to be taken with impunity; a ball from Mauleverer's pistol passed through the hat of the highwayman with an aim so slightly erring, that it whizzed among the locks of the astounded hero with a sound that sent a terror to his heart, no less from a love of his head than from anxiety for his hair. The shock staggered him for a moment; and a second shot from the hands of Mauleverer would have probably finished his earthly career, had not the third robber, who had hitherto remained almost inactive, thrown himself from his horse, which, tutored to such docility, remained perfectly still, and advancing with a bold step and a levelled pistol toward Mauleverer and his servant, said in a resolute voice, "Gentlemen, it is useless

to struggle; we are well armed, and resolved on effecting our purpose: your persons shall be safe if you lay down your arms, and also such part of your property as you may particularly wish to retain. But if you resist, I cannot answer for your lives."

Mauleverer had listened patiently to this speech in order that he might have more time for adjusting his aim: his reply was a bullet, which grazed the side of the speaker and tore away the skin, without inflicting any more dangerous wound. Muttering a curse upon the error of his aim, and resolute to the last when his blood was once up, Mauleverer backed one pace, drew his sword, and threw himself into the attitude of a champion well skilled in the use of the instrument he wore.

But that incomparable personage was in a fair way of ascertaining what happiness in the world to come is reserved for a man who has spared no pains to make himself comfortable in this. For the two first and most active robbers having finished the achievement of the horses, now approached Mauleverer, and the taller of them, still indignant at the late peril to his hair, cried out in a stentorian voice,—

"By Jove! you old fool, if you don't throw down your toasting-fork, I'll be the death of you!"

The speaker suited the action to the word, by cocking an immense pistol. Mauleverer stood his ground; but Smoothson retreated, and stumbling against the wheel of the carriage fell backward; the next instant, the second highwayman had possessed himself of the valet's pistols, and, quietly seated on the fallen man's stomach, amused himself by inspecting the contents of the domestic's pockets. Mauleverer was now alone, and his stubbornness so enraged the tall bully that his hand was already on his

trigger, when the third robber, whose side Mauleverer's bullet had grazed, thrust himself between the two—"Hold, Noel!" and he, pushing back his comrades posted—"And you, my lord, whose rashness ought to cost you your life, learn that men can rob generously." So saying, with one dexterous stroke from the robber's rolling ship, Mauleverer's sword flew upward, and alighted at the distance of ten paces from its owner.

"Approach now," said the victor to his comrades. "Ride the carriage, and wait all dispatch."

The tall highwayman hastened to execute this order, and the lesser and having satisfactorily finished the incursion into Mr. Smoothson's pockets, drew forth from his own pouch a tortuously thick rope; with this he tied the hands of the prostrate victim, mortising as he wound the rope round and round the wrists of the fallen man, in the following edifying strain—

"Lie still, sir—lie still, I beseech you! All wise men are fatalists; and no person is more pithy than that which says, 'what can't be cured must be endured.' Lie still, I tell you! Little, perhaps, do you think that you are performing one of the noblest functions of humanity; yes, sir, you are tying the pockets of the destitute, and by my present action I am securing you from any weakness of the flesh likely to impede so praiseworthy an end and so hazard the excellence of your action. There, sir, your hands are right,—lie still and reflect."

As he said this, with three gentle incursions of his feet, the mortalist called Mr. Smoothson into the ditch, and hastened to join his lengthy comrade in his pleasing occupation.

In the interim, Mauleverer and the third robber (who, in the true spirit of government, remained dignified and inactive while his followers plundered what he certainly designed to

share, if not to monopolise) stood within a few feet of each other, face to face.

Mauleverer had now convinced himself that all endeavour to save his property was hopeless, and he had also the consolation of thinking he had done his best to defend it. He, therefore, bade all his thoughts return to the care of his person. He adjusted his fur collar around his neck with great *easy fraid*, drew on his gloves, and, putting his terrified poodle, who sat shivering on its haunches with one paw raised, and nervously trembling, he said,—

"You, sir, seem to be a civil person, and I really should have felt quite sorry if I had had the misfortune to wound you. You are not hurt, I trust. Pray, if I may inquire, how am I to proceed? My carriage is in the ditch, and my horses by this time are probably at the end of the world."

"As for that matter," said the robber, whose face, like those of his comrades, was closely masked in the approved fashion of highwaymen of that day, "I believe you will have to walk to Maldenhead,—it is not far, and the night is fine!"

"A very trifling hardship, indeed!" said Mauleverer, ironically; but his new acquaintance made no reply, nor did he appear at all desirous of entering into any farther conversation with Mauleverer.

The earl, therefore, after watching the operations of the other robbers for some moments, turned on his heel, and remained haunting an opera tune with dignified indifference until the pair had finished rifling the carriage, and, seizing Mauleverer, proceeded to rifle him.

With a curled lip and a raised brow, that supreme personage suffered himself to be as the taller robber expressed it, "cleaned out." His watch, his rings, his purse, and his snuff box, all

went. It was long since the rascals had captured such a booty.

They had scarcely finished when the postboys, who had now begun to look about them, uttered a simultaneous cry, and at some distance a wagon was seen heavily approaching. Mauleverer really wanted his money, to say nothing of his diamonds; and so soon as he perceived assistance at hand, a new hope darted within him. His sword still lay on the ground; he sprang towards it—seized it, uttered a shout for help, and threw himself fiercely on the highwayman who had disarmed him; but the robber, warding off the blade with his whip, retreated to his saddle, which he

managed, despite of Mauleverer's lunges, to regain with impunity.

The other two had already mounted, and within a minute afterwards not a vestige of the trio was visible. "This is what may fairly be called *single blessedness*!" said Mauleverer, as, dropping his useless sword, he thrust his hands into his pockets.

Leaving our peerless peer to find his way to Maidenhead on foot, accompanied (to say nothing of the poodle) by one waggoner, two postboys, and the released Mr. Smoothson, all four charming him with their condolences, we follow with our story the steps of the three *aliens appetentes*.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"The rogues were very merry on their booty. They said a thousand things that showed the wickedness of their morals"—*Gil Blas*.

"They fixed on a spot where they made a cave, which was large enough to receive them and their horses. This cave was enclosed within a sort of thicket of bushes and brambles. From this station they used to issue," &c.—*Memoirs of Richard Turpin*.

It was not for several minutes after their flight had commenced that any conversation passed between the robbers. Their horses flew on like wind, and the country through which they rode presented to their speed no other obstacle than an occasional hedge, or a short cut through the thickneses of some leafless beechwood. The stars lent them a merry light, and the spirits of two of them at least were fully in sympathy with the exhilaration of the pace and the air. Perhaps, in the third, a certain presentiment that the present adventure would end less merrily than it had begun, conspired, with other causes of gloom, to check that exaltation of the blood which generally follows a successful exploit.

The path which the robbers took

wound by the sides of long woods, or across large tracts of uncultivated land. Nor did they encounter any thing living by the road, save now and then a solitary owl, wheeling its grey body around the skirts of the bare woods, or occasionally troops of conies, pursuing their sports and enjoying their midnight food in the fields.

"Heavens!" cried the tall robber, whose incognito we need no longer preserve, and who, as our readers are doubtless aware, answered to the name of Pepper,—"Heavens!" cried he, looking upward at the starry skies in a sort of ecstacy, "what a jolly life this is! Some fellows like hunting; d—— it! what hunting is like the road! If there be sport in hunting down a nasty fox, how much more is

there in hunting down a nice clean nobleman's carriage! If there be joy in getting a brash, how much more is there in getting a purse! If it be pleasant to fly over a hedge in the broad daylight, hang me if it be not ten times finer sport to skim it by night. Here goes! Look how the hedges run away from us! and the silly old moon dances about, as if the sight of us put the good lady in sport! These old maids are always glad to have an eye upon such fine dashing young fellows."

"Ay," cried the more erudite and sententious Augustus Tomlinson, praised by success from his usual philosophical society, "no work is so pleasant as night work, and the witches our ancestors burnt were in the right to ride out on their broomsticks, with the owls and the stars. We are their successors now, Ned. We are your true fly by night!"

"Only," quoth Ned, "we are a cursed deal more clever than they were, for they played their game without being a bit the richer for it, and we—I say, Tomlinson, where the devil did you put that red morocco case!"

"Experience never enlightens the foolish," said Tomlinson; "or you would have known, without asking, that I had put it in the very safest pocket in my coat. God, how heavy it is!"

"Well," cried Pepper, "I can't say I wish it were lighter! Only think of our robbing my lord twice, and on the same road too!"

"I say, Lovett," exclaimed Tomlinson, "was it not odd that we should have stumbled upon our Bath friend so unceremoniously? Lucky for us that we are so strict in robbing in masks! He would not have thought the better of Bath company if he had seen our faces."

Lovett, or rather Clifford, had hitherto been silent. He now turned

slowly in his saddle, and said,—"As it was, the poor devil was very nearly despatched. Long Ned was making short work with him—if I had not interposed!"

"And why did you?" said Ned.

"Because I will have no killing; it is the curse of the noble art of our profession to have passionate professors like thee."

"Passionate!" repeated Ned "well, I am a little choleric, I own it; but that is not so great a fault on the road as it would be in house-breaking. I don't know a thing that requires so much coolness and self-possession as cleaning out a house from top to bottom,—quietly and civilly, mind you!"

"That is the reason, I suppose, then," said Augustus, "that you altogether renounced *that* career. Your first adventure was house-breaking, I think I have heard you say. I confess it was a vulgar *début*—not worthy of you!"

"No!—Harry Cook seduced me; but the specimen I saw that night disgusted me of picking locks; it brings one in contact with such low companions; only think, there was a merchant—a rag merchant, one of the party!"

"Fangh!" said Tomlinson, in solemn disgust.

"Ay, you may well turn up your lip. I never broke into a house again."

"Who were your other companions?" asked Augustus.

"Only Harry Cook,* and a very singular woman —"

Here Ned's narrative was interrupted by a dark defile through a wood, allowing room for only one horseman at a time. They continued this gloomy path for several minutes, until at length it brought them to the brink of a large dell, overgrown with bushes, and spreading around some

* A noted highwayman.

what in the form of a rude semicircle. Here the robbers dismounted, and led their reeking horses down the descent. Long Ned, who went first, paused at a cluster of bushes, which seemed so thick as to defy intrusion, but which yielding, on either side, to the experienced hand of the robber, presented what appeared the mouth of a cavern. A few steps along the passage of this gulf brought them to a door, which, even seen by torch-light, would have appeared as exactly similar in colour and material to the rude walls on either side, as to have deceived any unsuspecting eye, and which, in the customary darkness brooding over it, might have remained for centuries undiscovered. Touching a secret latch, the door opened, and the robbers were in the secure precincts of the "Red Cave!" It may be remembered that among the early studies of our exemplary hero, the memoirs of Richard Turpin had formed a conspicuous portion; and it may also be remembered that, in the miscellaneous adventures of that gentleman, nothing had more delighted the juvenile imagination of the student than the description of the forest cave in which the gallant Turpin had been accustomed to conceal himself, his friend, his horse,

"And that sweet saint who lay by Turpin's side:"

or, to speak more domestically, the respectable Mrs. Turpin. So strong a hold, indeed, had that early reminiscence fixed upon our hero's mind, that, no sooner had he risen to eminence among his friends, than he had put the project of his childhood into execution. He had selected for the scene of his ingenuity an admirable spot. In a thinly-peopled country, surrounded by commons and woods, and yet (as Mr. Robins would say, if he had to dispose of it by auction) "within an easy ride" of populous and well-frequented roads, it possessed

all the advantages of secrecy for itself, and convenience for depredation. Very few of the gang, and those only who had been employed in its construction, were made acquainted with the secret of this cavern; and as our adventurers rarely visited it, and only on occasions of urgent want or secure concealment, it had continued for more than two years undiscovered and unsuspected.

The cavern, originally hollowed by nature, owed but little to the decorations of art; nevertheless, the roughness of the walls was concealed by a rude but comfortable arras of matting. Four or five of such seats as the robbers themselves could construct were drawn around a small but bright wood fire, which, as there was no chimney, spread a thin volume of smoke over the apartment. The height of the cave, added to the universal reconciler—custom—prevented, however, this evil from being seriously unpleasant; and, indeed, like the tenants of an Irish cabin, perhaps the inmates attached a degree of comfort to a circumstance which was coupled with their dearest household associations. A table, formed of a board coarsely planed, and supported by four legs of irregular size, made equal by the introduction of blocks or wedges between the legs and the floor, stood warming its uncouth self by the fire. At one corner, a covered cart made a conspicuous article of furniture, no doubt useful either in conveying plunder or provisions; beside the wheels were carelessly thrown two or three coarse carpenter's tools, and the more warlike utilities of a blunderbuss, a rifle, and two broad-swords. In the other corner was an open cupboard, containing rows of pewter platters, mugs, &c. Opposite the fire-place, which was to the left of the entrance, an excavation had been turned into a dormitory; and fronting the entrance was a pair of broad, strong, wooden steps, ascending to a large hollow about eight feet from

the ground. This was the entrance to the stables; and as soon as their owners released the reins of the horses, the domestic animals proceeded one by one leisurely up the steps, in the manner of quadrupeds educated at the public seminary of Askeby's, and disappeared within the aperture.

Those steps, when drawn up—which, however, from their extreme closeness, required the united strength of ten ordinary men, and was not that instantaneous work which it should have been,—made the place above a tolerably strong hold, for the wall was perfectly perpendicular and level, and it was only by placing his hands upon the ledge, and so lifting himself gymnastically upward, that an active assailant could have reached the summit; a work which defenders equally active, it may easily be supposed, would not be likely to allow.

This upper cave—for our robbers paid more attention to their horses than themselves, as the nobler animals of the two species—was evidently fitted up with some labour. The stalls were rudely divided, the litter of dry fern was clean, troughs were filled with water, and a large tub had been supplied from a pond at a little distance. A water-burner, and some old waggoners' trunks, were fixed on pegs to the wall. While at the far end of these singular stables was a door strongly barred, and only just large enough to admit the body of a man. The confederates had made it an express law never to enter their domain by this door, or to use it, except for the purpose of escape, should the cave ever be attacked; in which case, while one or two defended the entrance from the inner cave, another might unbar the door, and as it opened upon the thick-set part of the wood, through which with great ingenuity a labyrinthine path had been cut, not easily tracked by ignorant pursuers, those promotions of the highwaymen had provided

a fair hope of at least a temporary escape from any invading enemies.

Such were the domestic arrangements of the Red Cave; and it will be conceded that at least some skill had been shown in the choice of the spot, if there were a lack of taste in its adornments.

While the horses were performing their nightly ascent, our three heroes, after securing the door, made at once to the fire. And there, O reader! they were greeted in welcome by one,—an old and revered acquaintance of thine,—whom in such a scene it will equally astound and wound thee to behold.

Know, then,—but first we will describe to thee the occupation and the garb of the august personage to whom we allude. Bending over a large gridiron, daintily bespread with steaks of the fatted rump, the UNDI-VIUAL stood,—with his right arm bared above the elbow, and his right hand grasping that mimic trident known unto gastronomers by the monosyllable “fo.X.” His wigless head was adorned with a cotton night-cap. His upper vestment was discarded, and a whitish apron flowed gracefully down his middle man. His stockings were ungartered, and permitted between the knee and the calf interesting glimpses of the rude carnal. One list shoe and one of leathern manufacture eased his ample feet. Enterprise, or the noble glow of his peasant culinary profession, spread a yet rolier blush over a countenance early tinged by generous libations, and from beneath the curtain of his pallid eyelashes his large and retund orbs gleamed dazlingly on the newcomers. Such, O reader! was the aspect and the occupation of the venerable man whom we have long since taught thee to admire; such—also for the mortalities of earth!—was a new chapter only can contain the name.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Clifford.—"Hast thou not dropped from Heaven?"—*Tempest.*

PETER	MAC	GRAWLER							

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"God bless our King and Parliament,
And send he may make such knaves repent!"

Loyal Songs against the Rump Parliament.

"Ho, treachery! my guards, my cimeter!"—*Byron.*

WHEN the irreverent Mr. Pepper had warmed his hands sufficiently to be able to transfer them from the fire, he lifted the right palm, and, with an indecent jocularity of spirits, accosted the *ci-devant* ornament of "The Asinæum" with a sounding slap on his back—or some *such* part of his conformation.

"Ah, old boy!" said he, "is this the way you keep house for us? A fire not large enough to roast a nit, and a supper too small to fatten him beforehand! But how the deuce should you know how to provender for gentlemen? You thought you were in Scotland, I'll be bound!"

"Perhaps he did, when he looked upon you, Ned!" said Tomlinson, gravely; "tis but rarely out of Scot-

land that a man can see so big a rogue in so little a compass!"

Mr. Mac Grawler, into whose eyes the palmistry of Long Ned had brought tears of sincere feeling, and who had hitherto been rubbing the afflicted part, now grumbled forth,—

"You may say what you please, Mr. Pepper, but it is not often in my country that men of genius are seen performing the part of cook to robbers!"

"No!" quoth Tomlinson, "they are performing the more profitable part of robbers to cooks, eh!"

"Damnée, you're out," cried Long Ned; "for in that country, there are either no robbers, because there is nothing to rob; or the inhabitants are all robbers, who have plundered

one another, and made away with the beast."

"May the de'il catch thee!" said Mac Grawler, springing to the quick,—for, like all Scots, he was a patriot; much on the same principle as a woman who has the worst children makes the best mother.

"The de'il!" said Ned, mimicking the "sever' social," as Sir W. Scott has been pleased facetiously to call the "mountain tongue,"—the Scots in general seem to think it asilver, they keep it so carefully. "The de'il—*Mac De'il*, you mean,—sure the gentleman must have been a Scotchman!"

Tom was grimed in spite, but remembering the patience of Epictetus when a slave, and mindful also of the strong arm of Long Ned, he curled his temper, and turned the beefsteaks with his fork.

"Well, Ned," said Augustus, throwing himself into a chair which he drew to the fire, while he gently patted the large limbs of Mr. Pepper, as if to admonish him that they were not so transparent as glass—"let us look at the fire; and, by the by, it is your turn to see to the horses."

"Plague on it!" cried Ned, "it is always my turn, I think. Holla, you Scot at the post! can't you prove that I groomed the beasts last? I'll give you a crown to do it."

Then what Mac Grawler pricked up his ears.

"A crown!" said he,—"a crown! do you mean to insult me, Mr. Pepper? But, to be sure, you did see to the horses; and this worthy gentleman, Mr. Tomlinson, must remember it too."

"How, I?" cried Augustus; "you are mistaken, and I'll give you half a guinea to prove it."

Mac Grawler opened his eyes larger and larger, even as you may see a small circle in the water widen into a stormy, if you disturb the tranquillity of the surface by the intrusion of a foreign substance.

"Half a guinea!" said he; "nay, nay, you joke; I'm not mercenary,—you think I am! Pooh, pooh! you are mistaken; I'm a man who means *weel*, a man of veracity, and will speak the truth in spite of all the half guineas in the world. But certainly, now I begin to think of it, Mr. Tomlinson did see to the creatures last, and, Mr. Pepper, it is your turn."

"A very Daniel!" said Tomlinson, chuckling in his usual dry manner. "Ned, don't you hear the horses neigh!"

"Oh, hang the horses!" said the volatile Pepper, forgetting every thing else, as he thrust his hands in his pockets, and felt the gains of the night; let us first look to our winnings!"

So saying, he marched towards the table, and emptied his pockets thereon. Tomlinson, nothing loath, followed the example. Heavens! what exclamations of delight issued from the scoundrels' lips, as, one by one, they inspected their new acquisitions.

"Here's a magnificent creature!" cried Ned, handling that superb watch studded with jewels which the poor earl had once before unavailingly reborned: "a repeater, by Jove!"

"I hope not," said the phlegmatic Augustus; "repeaters will not tell well for your conversation, Ned! But, powers that be! look at this ring,—a diamond of the first water!"

"Oh, the sparkler! it makes one's mouth water as much as itself. Sooth, here's a precious box for a scoundrel—a picture inside, and rubies outside. The old fellow had excellent taste! It would shame him to see how pleased we are with his choice of jewellery!"

"Talking of jewellery," said Tomlinson, "I had almost forgotten the enormous case between you and me, I imagine we have a prize there; it looks like a jewel casket!"

So saying, the robber opened that case which on many a gala day had lent lustre to the polished person of Mauleverer. O reader, the burst of rapture that ensued! imagine it! we cannot express it! Like the Grecian painter, we drop a veil over emotions too deep for words.

"But here," said Pepper, when they had almost exhausted their transports at sight of the diamonds, "here's a purse—fifty guineas! And what's this? notes, by Jupiter! We must change them to-morrow before they are stopped. Curse those fellows at the Bank! they are always imitating us; we stop their money, and they don't lose a moment in stopping it too. Three hundred pounds! Captain, what say you to our luck?"

Clifford had sat gloomily looking on, during the operations of the robbers; he now, assuming a correspondent cheerfulness of manner, made a suitable reply, and after some general conversation, the work of division took place.

"We are the best arithmeticians in the world!" said Augustus, as he pouched his share: "addition, subtraction, division, reduction,—we have them all as pat as 'the Tutor's Assistant;' and, what is better, we make them all applicable to the *Rule of Three*."

"You have left out multiplication!" said Clifford, smiling.

"Ah! because that works differently; the other rules apply to the species of the kingdom; but as for multiplication, we multiply, I fear, no species but *our own*!"

"Fie, gentlemen!" said Mac Grawler, austere,—"for there is a wonderful decorum in your true Scotsmen. Actions are trifles; nothing can be cleaner than their *words*!"

"Oh, you thrust in *your* wisdom, do you?" said Ned. "I suppose you want your part of the booty!"

"Part!" said the subtilising Tomlinson. "He has nine times as many parts as we have already. Is he not a critter, and has he not the parts of speech at his fingers' end?"

"Nonsense!" said Mac Grawler, instinctively holding up his hands, with the fork dropping between the out-stretched fingers of the right palm.

"Nonsense yourself," cried Ned; "you have a share in what you never took! A pretty fellow, truly! Mind your business, Mr. Scot, and fork nothing but the beefsteaks!"

With this Ned turned to the stables, and soon disappeared among the horses; but Clifford, eyeing the disappointed and eager face of the culinary sage, took ten guineas from his own share, and pushed them towards his quondam tutor.

"There!" said he, emphatically.

"Nay, nay," grunted Mac Grawler; "I don't want the money,—it is my way to scorn such dross!" So saying, he pocketed the coins, and turned, muttering to himself, to the renewal of his festive preparations.

Meanwhile a whispered conversation took place between Augustus and the captain, and continued till Ned returned.

"And the night's viands smoked along the board!"

Souls of Don Raphael and Ambrose Lamela, what a charming thing it is to be a rogue for a little time! How merry men are when they have cheated their brethren! Your innocent milk-sops never made so jolly a supper as did our heroes of the way. Clifford, perhaps, acted a part, but the hilarity of his comrades was unfeigned. It was a delicious contrast,—the boisterous "ha, ha!" of Long Ned, and the secret, dry, calculating chuckle of Augustus Tomlinson. It was Rabelais against Voltaire. They united only in the objects of their jests, and foremost of those objects (wisdom is ever

the butt of the frivolous!) was the great Peter Mac Grawler.

The gracious dogs were especially merry upon the subject of the sage's former companion.

"Come, Mac, you carve this ham," said Ned; "you have had practice in cutting up."

The learned man whose name was thus disrespectfully abbreviated proceeded to perform what he was bid. He was about to sit down for that purpose, when Tomlinson slyly substituted his chair, the sage felt.

"No point at Mac Grawler," said the malicious Augustus; "whatever be his faults as a critic, you see that he is well grounded, and he gets at once to the bottom of a subject.—Mac, suppose your next work be entitled a *Treatise on War*?"

Men who have great minds are rarely flexible; they do not take a jest readily, so it was with Mac Grawler. He rose in a violent rage, and had the rubbers been more penetrating than they undoubtedly were, they might have noticed something dangerous in his eye. As it was, Clifford, who had often before been the protector of his tutor, interposed in his behalf, drew the sage a seat near to himself, and filled his plate for him. It was interesting to see this deference from Power to Learning! It was Alexander doing homage to Aristotle!

"There is only one thing I regret," cried Ned, with his mouthful "about the old lord,—it was a thousand pities we did not make him dance! I remember the day, captain, when you would have insisted on it. What a merry fellow you were once! Do you remember, one bright moonlight night, just like the present, for instance, when we were doing duty near Stutton, how you swore every person we stopped, above fifty years old, should dance a minuet with you?"

"Ay!" added Augustus, "and the

first was a bishop in a white wig. Faith, how stiffly his lordship jigged it! And how gravely Lovett bowed to him, with his hat off, when it was all over, and returned him his watch and ten guineas,—it was worth the sacrifice!"

"And the next was an old maid of quality," said Ned, "as lean as a lawyer. Don't you remember how she survetted?"

"To be sure," said Tomlinson; "and you very wittily called her a *hop pole*!"

"How delighted she was with the captain's snivility! When he gave her back her earrings and *aigrette*, she bade him with a tender sigh keep them for her sake,—ha! ha!"

"And the third was a beau!" cried Augustus; "and Lovett surrendered his right of partnership to me. Do you remember how I danced his beauship into the ditch?—Ah! we were mad fellows then, but we get sated—*blasé*, as the French say—as we grow older!"

"We look only to the main chance now," said Ned.

"Amour supersedes enterprise," added the contentious Augustus.

"And our captain takes to wine with an *h* after the *w*!" continued the metaphorical Ned.

"Come, we are melancholy," said Tomlinson, tossing off a bumper. "Methinks we are *really* growing old, we shall repent soon, and the next step will be—hanging!"

"Pore God!" said Ned, helping himself. "don't be so creaking. There are too dozens of malignant gentry, who should always be particular to avoid certain colours in dressing, hate to see a true boy in black, or a devil in blue. But here's my last glass to-night! I am confoundedly sleepy, and we rise early to-morrow."

"Hight, Ned," said Tomlinson; "give us a song before you retire, and let it be that one which Love"

composed the last time we were here."

Ned, always pleased with an opportunity of displaying himself, cleared his voice and complied.

A DITTY FROM SHERWOOD.

1.

"Laugh with us at the prince and the palace,

In the wild wood-life there is better cheer.
Would you heard your mirth from your neighbour's nudice.

Gather it up in our garners here.
Some kings their wealth from their subjects wring,

While by their foes they the poorer wax;
Free go the men of the wise wood king,
And it is only our foes we tax.

Leave the cheats of trade to the shrewd
ende wife;

Let the old be knaves at ease;
Away with the tide of that dashing life
Which is stirred by a constant breeze!

2.

Laugh with us when you hear deceiving
And solemn rogues tell you what knaves
we be;

Commerce and law have a method of
thieving

Worse than a stand at the outlaw's tree.
Nay, will the maiden we love despise
Gallants at least to each other true?

I grant that we trample on legal ties.
But I have heard that Love scorns them
1867.

Courage, then,—courage, ye jolly boys,
Whom the fool with the knavish rates:
Oh! who that is loved by the world enjoys
Half as much as the man it hates?"

"Bravissimo, Ned!" cried Tomlinson, rapping the table; "bravissimo! your voice is superb to-night, and your song admirable. Really, Lovett, it does your poetical genius great credit; quite philosophical, upon my honour."

"Bravissimo!" said Mac Grawler, nodding his head awfully. "Mr. Pepper's voice is as sweet as a bagpipe!—Ah! such a song would have been invaluable to 'The Asineum,' when I had the honour to——"

"Be Vicar of *Bray* to that establishment," interrupted Tomlinson.

"Pray, Mac Grawler, why do they call Edinburgh the Modern Athens?"

"Because of the learned and great men it produces," returned Mac Grawler, with conscious pride.

"Pooh! pooh!—you are thinking of *ancient* Athens. Your city is called the *modern* Athens, because you are all so like the modern Athenians,—the greatest scoundrels imaginable, unless travellers belie them."

"Nay," interrupted Ned, who was softened by the applause of the critic, "Mac is a good fellow, spare him. Gentlemen, your health. I am going to bed, and I suppose you will not tarry long behind me."

"Trust us for that," answered Tomlinson; "the captain and I will consult on the business of the morrow, and join you in the twinkling of a bedpost, as it has been shrewdly expressed."

Ned yawned his last "good night," and disappeared within the dormitory. Mac Grawler yawning also, but with a graver yawn, as became his wisdom, betook himself to the duty of removing the supper paraphernalia: after bustling soberly about for some minutes, he let down a press-bed in the corner of the cave (for he did not sleep in the robbers' apartment), and undressing himself, soon appeared buried in the bosom of Morpheus. But the chief and Tomlinson, drawing their seats nearer to the dying embers, defied the slothful god, and entered with low tones into a close and anxious commune.

"So then," said Augustus, "now that you have realised sufficient funds for your purpose, you will really desert us,—have you well weighed the *pros* and *cons*? Remember, that nothing is so dangerous to our state as reform; the moment a man grows honest, the gang forsake him; the magistrate misses his fee; the informer peaches; and the recusant hangs."

"I have well weighed all this."

answered Clifford, "and have decided on my course. I have only tarried till my means could assist my will. With my share of our present and late booty, I shall betake myself to the Continent. Prussia gives easy trust, and ready promotion, to all who will enlist in her service. But this language, my dear friend, seems strange from your lips. Surely you will join me in my separation from the *corps*? What! you shake your head? Are you not the same Tomlinson who at Bath agreed with me that we were in danger from the envy of our comrades, and that retreat had become necessary to our safety? Nay, was not this your main argument for our matrimonial expedition?"

"Why, look you, dear Lovett," said Augustus, "we are all blacks of matter, formed from the atoms of custom; in other words, we are a mechanism, to which habit is the spring. What could I do in an honest career? I am many years older than you. I have lived as a rogue till I have no other nature than roguesy. I doubt if I should not be a coward were I to turn soldier. I am sure I should be the most consummate of rascals, were I to affect to be honest. No, I mistook myself when I talked of separation. I must c'en jog on with my old comrades, and in my old ways, till I jog into the noose hempen—or, noisome alternative, the noose matrimonial."

"This is mere folly," said Clifford, from whose nervous and masculine mind habits were easily shaken. "We have not for so many years discarded all the servile laws of others, to be the abject slaves of our own weak nesses. Come, my dear fellow, rouse yourself. Heaven knows, were I to succumb to the foolishness of my own heart, I should be lost indeed. And perhaps, wrestle I ever so stoutly, I do not wrestle away that which clings within me, and will kill me, though

by inches. But let us not be cravens, and suffer fate to drown us rather than swim. In a word, fly with me ere it be too late. A smuggler's vessel waits me off the coast of Dorset, in three days from this I sail. Be my companion. We can both rein a fiery horse, and wield a good sword. As long as men make war one against another, those accomplishments will prevent their owner from starving, or ——"

"If employed in the field, not the road," interrupted Tomlinson, with a smile,—"from hanging. But it cannot be." I wish you all joy—all success in your career: you are young, bold, and able; and you always had a loftier spirit than I have. Knave I am, and knave I must be to the end of the chapter!"

"As you will," said Clifford, who was not a man of many words, but he spoke with reluctance: if so, I must seek my fortune alone."

"When do you leave us?" asked Tomlinson.

"To-morrow, before noon. I shall visit London for a few hours, and then start at once for the coast."

"London!" exclaimed Tomlinson; "what, the very den of danger!—Peek! you do not know what you say: or, do you think it fit to cross Mother Lobkina before you depart?"

"Not that," answered Clifford. "I have already ascertained that she is above the reach of all want; and her days, poor soul! cannot, I fear, be many. In all probability, she would scarcely recognise me; for her habits cannot much have improved her memory. Would I could say as much for her neighbours! Were I to be seen in the persons of low thievery, you know, as well as I do, that some standard of kindness would turn infortunes against the notorious Captain Lovett."

"What, then, takes you to town! Ah!—you turn away your face.—I guess! Well, Love has ruined many

a hero before; may you not be the worse for his godship?"

Clifford did not answer, and the conversation made a sudden and long pause; Tomlinson broke it.

"Do you know, Lovett," said he, "though I have as little heart as most men, yet I feel for you more than I could have thought it possible. I would fain join you; there is devilish good tobacco in Germany, I believe; and, after all, there is not so much difference between the life of a thief and of a soldier!"

"Do profit by so sensible a remark," said Clifford. "Reflect how certain of destruction is the path you now tread: the gallows and the hulks are the only goals!"

"The prospects are not pleasing, I allow," said Tomlinson; "nor is it desirable to be preserved for another century in the immortality of a glass case in Surgeons' Hall, grinning from ear to ear, as if one had made the merriest finale imaginable.—Well! I will sleep on it, and you shall have my answer to-morrow;—but poor Ned!"

"Would he not join us?"

"Certainly not: his neck is made for a rope, and his mind for the Old Bailey. There is no hope for him; yet he is an excellent fellow. We must not even tell him of our meditated desertion."

"By no means. I shall leave a letter to our London chief: it will explain all. And now to bed;—I look to your companionship as settled."

"Humph!" said Augustus Tomlinson.

So ended the conference of the robbers. About an hour after it had ceased, and when no sound save the heavy breath of Long Ned broke the stillness of the night, the intelligent countenance of Peter Mac Grawler slowly elevated itself from the lonely pillow on which it had reclined.

By degrees the back of the sage stiffened into perpendicularity, and he sat for a few moments erect on his seat of honour, apparently in listening deliberation. Satisfied with the deep silence that, save the solitary inter-ruption we have specified, reigned around, the learned disciple of Vatel rose gently from the bed,—hurried on his clothes,—stole on tiptoe to the door,—unbarred it with a noiseless hand,—and vanished. Sweet reader! while thou art wondering at his absence, suppose we account for his appearance.

One evening, Clifford and his companion Augustus had been enjoying the rational amusement of Ranelagh, and were just leaving that celebrated place when they were arrested by a crowd at the entrance. That crowd was assembled round a pickpocket; and that pickpocket—O virtue!—O wisdom!—O Asinæum!—was Peter Mac Grawler! We have before said that Clifford was possessed of a good mien and an imposing manner, and these advantages were at that time especially effectual in preserving our Orbilius from the pump. No sooner did Clifford recognise the magisterial face of the sapient Scot, than he boldly thrust himself into the middle of the crowd, and collaring the enterprising citizen who had collared Mac Grawler, declared *himself* ready to vouch for the honesty of the very respectable person whose identity had evidently been so grossly mistaken. Augustus, probably foreseeing some ingenious *ruse* of his companion's, instantly seconded the defence. The mob, who never desery any difference between impudence and truth, gave way; a constable came up—took part with the friend of two gentlemen so unexceptionably dressed—our friends walked off—the crowd repented of their precipitation, and, by way of amends, ducked the gentleman whose pockets had been picked. It was in

rain for him to defend himself, for he had been impeded in his speech, and Mac Grawler, not having ducked him once for his guilt, ducked him a second time for his embarrassment.

In the interim, Clifford had with drawn his quondam Mentor to the regions of a coffee-house; and while Mac Grawler's soul expanded itself by wine, he narrated the causes of his dilemma. It seems that that incomparable journal "The Asmodean," devoted to a series of most popular articles upon the writings of "Aulus Prudentius," to which were added an expensive string of dialogues, written in a tone of broad humour, viz., broad Scotch, with Scotchmen it is all the same thing, despite these invaluable misalliances, to say nothing of some gross political articles, in which it was clearly proved to the satisfaction of the mob, that the low poor devils out the better for their constitutions, — despite, we say, these great acquisitions to British literature, "The Asmodean" tottered, fell, buried its book-seller, and crushed its author: Mac Grawler only — escaping, like Theseus from the enormous helmet of Minotaur — Mac Grawler only survived. "Love," says Sir Philip Sidney, "makes a man see better than a pair of spectacles." Love of life has a very different effect on the optics, — it makes a man woefully dim of inspection, and sometimes causes him to see his own property in another man's purse. This *deceptive mode*, did it impose upon Peter Mac Grawler? He went to Ramslagh. Reader, thou knowest the rest!

Wine and the ingenuity of the robbers having extracted this narrative from Mac Grawler, the barbers of expertness deficiency were easily done away with.

Our heroes offered to the sage an introduction to their club; the offer was accepted; and Mac Grawler, having been first made drunk, was

next made a robber. The gang engaged him in various little matters, in which we grieve to relate that, though his intentions were excellent, his success was so ill as thoroughly to enrage his employers; nay, they were about at one time, when they wanted to precipitate justice, to hand him over to the secular power, when Clifford interposed in his behalf. From a robber the sage dwindled into a drudge, menial offices (the robbers, the lying rascals, declared that such offices were best fitted to the genius of his country) succeeded to noble exploits, and the worst of robbers became the best of cooks. How vain is all wisdom but that of long experience! Though Clifford was a sensible and keen man, — though he knew our sage to be a knave, he never dreamed he could be a traitor. He thought him too insolent to be malicious, and — short-sighted humanity! — too silly to be dangerous. He trusted the sage with the secret of the cavern; and Augustus, who was a bit of an epicure, submitted, though forebodingly, to the choice, because of the Scotchman's skill in broiling.

But Mac Grawler, like Brutus, concealed a scheming heart under a stolid guise; the apprehension of the noted Lovett had become a matter of serious desire; the police was no longer to be bribed; nay, they were now eager to bribe; — Mac Grawler had watched his time — sold his chief, and was now on the road to Reading, to meet and to guide to the cavern Mr. Nabben of Bow Street and four of his attendants.

Having thus, as rapidly as we were able, traced the causes which brought so startlingly before your notice the most incomparable of critics, we now, reader, return to our robbers.

"Hut, Lovett!" said Tomlinson, half asleep, "nought I heard something in the outer cave."

"It is the Scot, I suppose," answered

Clifford : "you saw, of course, to the door!"

"To be sure!" muttered Tomlinson, and in two minutes more he was asleep.

Not so Clifford : many and anxious thoughts kept him waking. At one while, when he anticipated the opening to a new career, somewhat of the stirring and high spirit which still moved amidst the guilty and confused habits of his mind made his pulse feverish, and his limbs restless : at another time, an agonising remembrance—the remembrance of Lucy in all her charms, her beauty, her love, her tender and innocent heart,—Lucy all perfect, and lost to him for ever, banished every other reflection, and only left him the sick sensation of despondency and despair. "What avails my struggle for a better name!" he thought. "Whatever my future lot, *she* can never share it. My punishment is fixed, —it is worse than a death of shame; it is a life without hope! Every moment I feel, and shall feel to the last, the pressure of a chain that may never be broken or loosened! And yet, fool that I am! I cannot leave this country without seeing her again, without telling her, that I have *really* looked my last. But have I not *twice* told her that! Strange fatality! But twice have I spoken to her of love, and each time it was to tear myself from her at the moment of my confession. And even now something that I have no power to resist compels me to the same idle and weak indulgence. Does destiny arrest me! Ay, perhaps to my destruction! Every hour a thousand deaths encompass me. I have now obtained all for which I seemed to linger. I have won, by a new crime, enough to bear me to another land, and to provide me there a soldier's destiny. I should not lose an hour in flight, yet I rush into the nest of my enemies, only for one unavailing word with her;

and this, too, after I have already bade her farewell! *Is this fate!* if it be so, what matters it! I no longer care for a life which, after all, I should reform in vain, if I could not reform it for her: yet—yet, selfish, and lost that I am! will it be nothing to think hereafter that I have redeemed her from the disgrace of having loved an outcast and a felon! If I can obtain honour, will it not, in my own heart at least,—will it not reflect, however dimly and distantly, upon her!"

Such, bewildered, unsatisfactory, yet still steeped in the colours of that true love which raises even the lowest, were the midnight meditations of Clifford: they terminated, towards the morning, in an uneasy and fitful slumber. From this he was awakened by a loud yawn from the throat of long Ned, who was always the earliest riser of his set.

"Holla!" said he, "it is almost daybreak; and if we want to cash our notes, and to move the old lord's jewels, we should already be on the start."

"A plague on you!" said Tomlinson, from under cover of his woollen nightcap; "it was but this instant that I was dreaming you were going to be hanged, and now you wake me in the pleasantest part of the dream!"

"You be shot!" said Ned, turning one leg out of bed; "by the by, you took more than your share last night, for you owed me three guineas for our last game at cribbage! You'll please to pay me before we part to-day: short accounts make long friends!"

"However true that maxim may be," returned Tomlinson, "I know one much truer, namely—long friends will make short accounts! You must ask Jack Ketch this day month if I'm wrong!"

"That's what you call wit, I suppose!" retorted Ned, as he now, struggling into his inexpressibles, felt his way into the outer cave.

"What, ho! Mac!" cried he, as he went, "star those bobkins of thine, which thou art pleased to call legs;—strike a light, and be d—d to you!"

"A light for you," said Tomlinson, profoundly, as he reluctantly left his couch, "will indeed be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles!'"

"Why, Mac—Mac!" shouted Ned, "why don't you answer!—faith, I think the Scot's dead!"

"Seize your men!—yield, sirs!" cried a stern, sudden voice from the gloom; and at that instant two dark lanterns were turned, and their light streamed full upon the astounded forms of Tomlinson and his gaunt comrade! In the dark shade of the background four or five forms were also indistinctly visible; and the ray of the lanterns glimmered on the blades of cutlasses and the barrels of weapons still loosely resisted.

Tomlinson was the first to recover his self-possession. The light just glanced upon the first step of the stairs leading to the stables, leaving the rest in shadow. He made one stride to the place beside the cart, where, we have said, lay some of the robbers' weapons; he had been anticipated—the weapons were gone. The next moment Tomlinson had sprung up the steps.

"Lovett!—Lovett!—Lovett!" shouted he.

The captain, who had followed his comrades into the cavern, was already in the grasp of two men. From few ordinary mortals, however, could any two be selected as fearful odds against such a man as Clifford; a man in whom a much larger share of shrewdness and muscle than is usually the lot even of the strong had been hardened, by perpetual exercise, into a consistency and iron firmness which linked power and activity into a union scarcely less remarkable than that immortalised in the glorious beauty of the sculptured gladiator. His

right hand is upon the throat of one assailant, his left locks, as in a vice, the wrist of the other; you have scarcely time to breathe; the former is on the ground—the pistol of the latter is wrenched from his gripe—Clifford is on the step—a ball—another—whizzes by him!—he is by the side of the faithful Augustus!

"Open the secret door!" whispered Clifford to his friend; "I will draw up the steps alone!"

Scarcely had he spoken, before the steps were already, but slowly, ascending beneath the desperate strength of the robber. Meanwhile, Ned was struggling, as he best might, with two sturdy officers, who appeared loath to use their weapons without an absolute necessity, and who endeavoured, by main strength, to capture and detain their antagonist.

"Look well to the door!" cried the voice of the principal officer, "and hang out more light!"

Two or three additional lanterns were speedily brought forward, and over the whole interior of the cavern a dim but sufficient light now rapidly circled, giving to the scene and to the combatants a picturesque and wild appearance!

The quick eye of the head officer descried in an instant the rise of the steps, and the advantage the robbers were thereby acquiring. He and two of his men throw themselves forward, seized the ladder, if so it may be called, dragged it once more to the ground, and ascended. But Clifford, grasping with both hands the broken shaft of a cart that lay in reach, received the foremost invader with a salute that sent him prostrate and senseless back among his companions. The second shared the same fate, and the stout leader of the enemy, who, like a true general, had kept himself in the rear, passed now in the middle of the steps, dismayed alike by the reception of his friends and the

athletic form towering above, with raised weapon and menacing attitude. Perhaps that moment seemed to the judicious Mr. Nabbem more favourable to parley than to conflict. He cleared his throat, and thus addressed the foe:—

"You, sir, Captain Lovett, alias Howard, alias Jackson, alias Caven-dish, alias Solomons, alias Devil, for I knows you well, and could swear to you with half an eye, in your clothes or without: you lay down your club there, and let me come alongside of you, and you'll find me as gentle as a lamb; for I've been used to gemmen all my life, and I knows how to treat 'em when I has 'em!"

"But if I will not let you 'come alongside of me,—what then?"

"Why, I must send one of these here pops through your skull, that's all!"

"Nay, Mr. Nabbem, that would be too cruel! You surely would not harm one who has such an esteem for you? Don't you remember the manner in which I brought you off from Justice Burnflat, when you were accused, you know whether justly or —"

"You're a liar, captain!" cried Nabbem, furiously, fearful that something not meet for the ears of his companions should transpire. "You knows you are! Come down, or let me mount; otherwise I won't be 'sponsible for the consequences!"

Clifford cast a look over his shoulder. A gleam of the grey daylight already glimmered through a chink in the secret door, which Tomlinson had now unbarred, and was about to open.

"Listen to me, Mr. Nabbem," said he, "and perhaps I may grant what

you require! What would you do with me if you had me?"

"You speaks like a sensible man, now," answered Nabbem; "and that's after my own heart. Why, you sees, captain, your time has come, and you can't shilly-shally any longer. You have had your full swing; your years are up, and you must die like a man! But I gives you my honour, as a gemman, that if you surrenders, I'll take you to the justice folks as tenderly as if you were made of cotton."

"Give way one moment," said Clifford, "that I may plant the steps firmer for you."

Nabbem retreated to the ground, and Clifford, who had, good-naturedly enough, been unwilling unnecessarily to damage so valuable a functionary, lost not the opportunity now afforded him. Down thundered the steps, clattering heavily among the other officers, and falling like an avalanche on the shoulder of one of the arresters of Long Ned.

Meanwhile, Clifford sprang after Tomlinson through the aperture, and found himself—in the presence of four officers, conducted by the shrewd Mac Grawler. A blow from a bludgeon on the right cheek and temple of Augustus felled that hero. But Clifford bounded over his comrade's body, dodged from the stroke aimed at himself, caught the blow aimed by another assailant in his open hand, wrested the bludgeon from the officer, struck him to the ground with his own weapon, and darting onward through the labyrinth of the wood, commenced his escape with a step too fleet to allow the hope of a successful pursuit.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"In short, Isabella, I offer you myself!

Heavens!" cried Isabella, "what do I hear? You, my lord?"

Castle of Otranto.

A NOVEL is like a weatherglass, where the man appears out at one time, the woman at another. Variable as the atmosphere, the changes of our story now represent Lucy to the reader.

That charming young person—who, it may be remarked, is her father excepted) the only unsophisticated and unmodified character in the pages of a story in some measure designed to shew, in the depravities of character, the depravities of that social state wherein characters are formed—was sitting alone in her apartment at the period in which we return to her. As time, and that innate and insensible fund of *healing*, which Nature has placed in the bosoms of the young, in order that her great law, the passing away of the old, may not leave too lasting and keen a wound, had softened her first anguish at her father's death, the remembrance of Clifford again resumed its ancient sway in her heart. The loneliness of her life,—the absence of amusement,—even the sensitiveness and languor which succeed to grief, conspired to invent the image of her lover in a *romantic* and more impressive guise. She recalled his words, his actions, his letters, and employed herself whole hours, whole days and nights, in endeavouring to decipher their mystery. What that has been loved will not acknowledge the singular and mighty force with which a girl, innocent herself, clings to the belief of innocence in her lover? In breasts young and unacquainted with the world, there is

so pure a credulity in the existence of unmixed good, so firm a reluctance to think that where we love there can be that which we would not esteem, or where we admire there can be that which we ought to blame, that one may almost deem it an argument in favour of our *natural* power to attain a greater eminence in virtue, than the habits and arts of the existing world will allow us to reach. Perhaps it is not paradoxical to say that we could scarcely believe perfection in others, were not the germ of perfectibility in our own minds! When a man has lived some years among the actual contests of faction, without imbibing the prejudices as well as the experience, how wonderingly he smiles at his worship of former idols!—how different a colour does history wear to him!—how cautious is he now to praise!—how slow to admire!—how prone to cavil! Human nature has become the human nature of art; and he estimates it not from what it may be, but from what, in the corruptions of a semi-civilisation, it is! But in the same manner as the young student clings to the belief that the sage or the minstrel, who has enlightened his reason or charmed his imagination, is in character as in genius elevated above the ordinary herd, free from the passions, the frivolities, the little meanesses, and the darkening vices which ordinary flesh is heir to, does a woman, who loves for the first time, cling to the imagined excellence of him she loves! When Fionna was shocked at the idea of an occasional

fit of intoxication in her "noble, her unrivalled" lover, who does not acknowledge how natural were her feelings! Had Evelina been married six years, and the same lover, *then her husband*, been really guilty of what she suspected, who does not feel that it would have been very unnatural to have been shocked in the least at the occurrence? She would not have loved him less, nor admired him less, nor would he have been less "the noble and the unrivalled,"—he would have taken his glass too much, have joked the next morning on the event, and the gentle Evelina would have made him a cup of tea: but that which would have been a matter of pleasantry in the husband would have been matter of damnation in the lover.—But to return to Lucy.

If it be so hard, so repellent to believe a lover guilty even of a trivial error, we may readily suppose that Lucy never for a moment admitted the supposition that Clifford had been really guilty of gross error or wilful crime. True, that expressions in his letter were more than suspicious; but there is always a charm in the candour of self-condemnation. As it is difficult to believe the excellence of those who praise themselves, so it is difficult to fancy those criminal who condemn! What, too, is the process of a woman's reasoning! Alas! she is too credulous a physiognomist. The turn of a throat, with her, is the unerring token of nobleness of mind; and no one can be guilty of a sin who is blest with a beautiful forehead! How fondly, how fanatically Lucy loved! She had gathered together a precious and secret hoard;—a glove—a pen—a book—a withered rose-leaf;—treasures rendered inestimable because *he* had touched them: but more than all, had she the series of his letters, from the first formal note written to her father, meant for her, in which he answered an invitation, and requested Miss

Brandon's acceptance of the music she had wished to have, to the last wild and, to her, inexplicable letter in which he had resigned her for ever. On these relies her eyes fed for hours; and as she pored over them, and over thoughts too deep not only for tears, but for all utterance or conveyance, you might have almost literally watched the fading of her rich cheek, and the pining away of her rounded and elastic form.

It was just in such a mood that she was buried when her uncle knocked at her door for admittance: she hurried away her treasures, and hastened to admit and greet him. "I have come," said he, smiling, "to beg the pleasure of your company for an old friend who dines with us to-day.—But stay, Lucy, your hair is ill-arranged. Do not let me disturb so important an occupation as your toilette: dress yourself, my love, and join us."

Lucy turned, with a suppressed sigh, to the glass. The uncle lingered for a few moments, surveying her with mingled pride and doubt; he then slowly left the chamber.

Lucy soon afterwards descended to the drawing-room, and beheld, with a little surprise (for she had not had sufficient curiosity to inquire the name of the guest), the slender form and comely features of Lord Mauleverer. The earl approached with the same grace which had, in his earlier youth, rendered him almost irresistible, but which now, from the contrast of years with manner, contained a *slight* mixture of the comic. He paid his compliments, and in paying them, declared that he must leave it to his friend, Sir William, to explain *all* the danger he had dared, for the sake of satisfying himself that Miss Brandon was no less lovely than when he had last beheld her.

"Yes, indeed," said Brandon, with a scarcely perceptible sneer, "Lord Mauleverer has literally endured the

moving accidents of flood and field — for he was nearly exterminated by a highwayman and all but drowned in a ditch."

"Commend me to a friend for setting one off to the best advantage," said Mauleverer, gaily. "Instead of attaching your sympathy, you see, Brandon would expose me to your ridicule; judge for yourself whether I deserve it." — and Mauleverer proceeded to give, with all the animation which belonged to his character, the particulars of that adventure with which the reader is so well acquainted. He did not, we may be sure, feel any scruple in representing himself and his prowess in the most favourable colours.

The story was scarcely ended when dinner was announced. During that meal, Mauleverer exerted himself to be amiable with infinite address. Sifting his conversation more than he had hitherto deemed to do, to the temper of Lucy, and more anxious to soften than to dazzle, he certainly never before appeared to her so attractive. We are bound to add, that the point of attraction did not reach beyond the confusion that he was a very agreeable *old man*.

Perhaps, if there had not been a certain half-melancholy vein in his conversation, possibly less incongenial to his lordship's train, the remembrance of his lost diamonds, and the impression that Sir William Brandon's cook was considerably worse than his own, he might not have been so successful in pleasing Lucy. As for himself, all the previous impressions she had made on him returned in colours yet more vivid; even the delicate and subdued cast of beauty which had succeeded to her earlier brilliancy, was far more charming to his fastidious and courtly taste than her former glow of spirits and health. He felt himself very much in love during dinner, and after it was over, and Lucy had retired, he told

Brandon with a passionate air, "that he *adored* his niece to distraction!"

The wily judge affected to receive the intimation with indifference; but knowing that too long an absence is injurious to a *grande passion*, he did not keep Mauleverer very late over his wine.

The earl returned rapturously to the drawing room, and besought Lucy, in a voice in which affectation seemed swooning with delight, to indulge him with a song. More and more enchanted by her assent, he drew the music stool to the harpsichord, placed a chair beside her, and presently appeared lost in transport. Meanwhile Brandon, with his back to the pair, covered his face with his handkerchief, and to all appearance, yielded to the voluptuousness of an after-dinner repose.

Lucy's song book opened accidentally at a song which had been praised by Clifford; and as she sang, her voice took a richer and more tender tone than in Mauleverer's presence it had ever before assumed.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE VIOLETS WHICH LOSE THEIR SCENT IN MAY.

1.

"In the shadow that falls from the silent hill

We slept, in our green retreats:
And the April showers were wont to *glue*
Our hearts with sweets.

2.

And though we lay in a lowly bower
Yet all things loved us well,
And the waking bee left her fairest flower
With us to dwell.

3.

But the warm May came in his pride to woo
The wealth of our hushed store;
And our hearts just felt his breath, and knew
Their sweets no more!

4.

And the summer reigns in the quiet spot
Where we dwell, and its cure and charms
Bring balm to our sisters' hearts, but not—
Ah! not to ours.

A

We live, we bloom but for ever o'er
 Is the charm of the earth and sky;
 To our life, ye heavens, that balm restore,
 Or—bid us die!"

As with eyes suffused with many recollections, and a voice which melted away in an indescribable and thrilling pathos, Lucy ceased her song, Maul everer, charmed out of himself, gently took her hand, and, holding the soft treasure in his own, scarcely less soft, he murmured,—

"Angel! sing on. Life would be like your own music, if I could breathe it away at your feet!"

There had been a time when Lucy would have laughed outright at this declaration: and even as it was, a suppressed and half-arch smile played in the dimples of her beautiful mouth, and bewitchingly contrasted the swimming softness of her eyes.

Drawing rather an erroneous omen from the smile, Mauleverer rapturously continued, still detaining the hand which Lucy endeavoured to extricate.

"Yes, enchanting Miss Brandon! I who have for so many years boasted of my invulnerable heart, am subdued at last. I have long, very long, struggled against my attachment to you. Alas! it is in vain; and you behold me now utterly at your mercy. Make me the most miserable of men, or the most enviable. Enchantress, speak!"

"Really, my lord," said Lucy, hesitating, yet rising, and freeing herself from his hand, "I find it difficult to suppose you serious; and, perhaps, this is merely a gallantry to me, by way of practice on others."

"Sweet Lucy, if I may so call you," answered Mauleverer, with an ardent gaze, "do not, I implore you, even for a moment, affect to mistake me! do not for a moment jest at what, to me, is the bane or bliss of life! Dare I hope that my hand and heart, which

I now offer you, are not deserving of your derision?"

Lucy gazed on her adorer with a look of serious inquiry; Brandon still appeared to sleep.

"If you are in earnest, my lord," said Lucy, after a pause, "I am truly and deeply sorry; for the friend of my uncle I shall always have esteem: believe that I am truly sensible of the honour you render me, when I add my regret, that I can have no other sentiment than esteem."

A blank and puzzled bewilderment, for a moment, clouded the expressive features of Mauleverer. It passed away.

"How sweet is your rebuke!" said he. "Yes! I do not yet deserve any other sentiment than esteem: you are not to be won precipitately; a long trial,—a long course of attentions,—a long knowledge of my devoted and ardent love, alone will entitle me to hope for a warmer feeling in your breast. Fix then your own time of courtship, angelic Lucy! a week,—nay, a month!—till then, I will not even press you to appoint that day, which to me will be the whitest of my life!"

"My lord!" said Lucy, smiling now no longer half-archly, "you must pardon me for believing your proposal can be nothing but a jest; but here, I beseech you, let it rest for ever: do not mention this subject to me again."

"By heavens!" cried Mauleverer, "this is too cruel.—Brandon, intercede for me with your niece."

Sir William started, naturally enough, from his slumber, and Mauleverer continued,—

"Yes, intercede for me; you, my oldest friend, be my greatest benefactor! I sue to your niece,—she affects to disbelieve,—will you convince her of my truth, my devotion, my worship!"

"Disbelieve you!" said the bland

judge, with the same secret sneer that usually lurked in the corners of his mouth. "I do not wonder that she is slow to credit the honour you have done her, and for which the noblest houses in England have sighed in vain. Lucy, will you be cruel to Lord Mauleverer? Believe me, he has often confided to me his love for you; and if the experience of some years avails, there is not a question of his honour and his truth—I leave his fate in your hands."

Brandon turned to the door.

"Stay, dear sir," said Lucy, "and, instead of interceding for Lord Mauleverer, intercede for me." Her look now settled into a calm and decided earnestness of expression. "I feel highly flattered by his lordship's proposal, which, as you say, I might well doubt to be gravely meant. I wish him all happiness with a lady of higher deserts, but I speak from an unalterable determination, when I say, that I can never accept the dignity with which he would invest me."

So saying, Lucy walked quickly to the door, and vanished, leaving the two friends to comment as they would, upon her conduct.

"You have spent all with your precipitation," said the uncle.

"Precipitation! d—n it, what would you have! I have been fifty years making up my mind to marry; and now, when I have not a day to lose, you talk of precipitation!" answered the lover, throwing himself into an easy chair.

"But you have not been fifty years making up your mind to marry my niece," said Brandon, dryly.

"To be refused—positively refused, by a country girl!" continued Mauleverer, still quivering aloud: "and that too at my age, and with all my experience!—a country girl without rank, *ten*, accomplishments! By heavens! I don't care if all the world heard it,—for not a soul in the world would ever believe it."

Brandon sat speechless, eyeing the mortified face of the courtier with a malicious complacency, and there was a pause of several minutes. Sir William then mastering the strange feeling which made him always rejoice in whatever threw ridicule on his friend, approached, laid his hand kindly on Mauleverer's shoulder, and talked to him of comfort and of encouragement. The reader will believe that Mauleverer was not a man whom it was impossible to encourage.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Before he came, everything loved me, and I had more things to love than I could reckon by the hairs of my head. Now, I feel I can love but one, and that one has deserted me.

* * * * *

Well, be it so—let her perish, let her be anything but mine."

Melmoth.

EARLY the next morning, Sir William Brandon was closeted for a long time with his niece, previous to his departure to the duties of his office. Anxious and alarmed for the success of one of the darling projects of his ambition, he spared no art in his conversation with Lucy, that his great ingenuity of eloquence and wonderful insight into human nature could suggest, in order to gain at least a foundation for the raising of his scheme. Among other resources of his worldly tact, he hinted at Lucy's love for Clifford; and (though darkly and subtly, as befitting the purity of the one he addressed) this abandoned and wily person did not scruple to hint also at the possibility of indulging that love *after* marriage; though he denounced, as the last of indecours, the crime of encouraging it *before*. This hint, however, fell harmless upon the innocent ear of Lucy. She did not, in the remotest degree, comprehend its meaning; she only, with a glowing cheek and a pouting lip, resented the allusion to a love which she thought it insolent in any one even to suspect.

When Brandon left the apartment, his brow was clouded, and his eye absent and thoughtful: it was evident that there had been little in the conference with his niece to please or content him. Miss Brandon herself was greatly agitated: for there was in her uncle's nature that silent and

impressive secret of influencing or commanding others, which almost so invariably, and yet so quietly, attains the wishes of its owner; and Lucy, who loved and admired him sincerely—not the less, perhaps, for a certain modicum of fear—was greatly grieved at perceiving how rooted in him was the desire of that marriage which she felt was a moral impossibility. But if Brandon possessed the secret of sway, Lucy was scarcely less singularly endowed with the secret of resistance. It may be remembered, in describing her character, that we spoke of her as one who seemed, to the superficial, as of too yielding and soft a temper. But circumstances gave the lie to manner, and proved that she eminently possessed a quiet firmness and latent resolution, which gave to her mind a nobleness and *trustworthy* power, that never would have been suspected by those who met her among the ordinary paths of life.

Brandon had not been long gone, when Lucy's maid came to inform her that a gentleman, who expressed himself very desirous of seeing her, waited below. The blood rushed from Lucy's cheek at this announcement, simple as it seemed. "What gentleman *could* be desirous of seeing her? Was it—was it Clifford?" She remained for some moments motionless, and literally unable to move; at length she summoned courage, and smiling with self-contempt at a notion

which appeared to her *after* thoughts utterly averted, she descended to the drawing-room. The first glance she directed towards the stranger, who stood by the fireplace with folded arms, was sufficient,—it was impossible to mistake, though the face was averted, the unequalled form of her lover. She advanced eagerly with a faint cry, clanked herself, and sank upon the sofa.

Clifford turned towards her, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance with an intense and melancholy gaze, but he did not utter a syllable, and Lucy, after pausing in expectation of his voice, looked up, and caught, in *all* the strange and peculiar aspect of his features. He approached her slowly and still silent; but his gaze seemed to grow more earnest and powerful as he advanced.

"Yes," said he at last, in a broken and indistinct voice, "I see you once more, after all my promises to quit you for ever,—after my solemn farewell, after all that I have cost you,—for, *Lucy*, you love me,—you love me,—and I shudder while I feel it, after all I myself have borne and resisted, I *must* more *must* wildly into your promises! How have I burnt and agonised for this moment! How have I said, 'Let me behold her once more—only once more, and Fate may then do her worst!' Lucy! dear, dear Lucy! forgive me for my weakness. It is now in better and sterner reality the very last I can be guilty of."

As he spoke, Clifford sank beside her. He took both her hands in his, and holding them, though without pressure, again looked passionately upon her innocent yet eloquent face. It seemed as if he were moved beyond all the ordinary feelings of reason and of love. He did not attempt to kiss the hands he held; and though the blood thrilled through every vein and fibre of his frame, his clasp was as tight as that in which the first

timidity of a boy's love ventures to stamp itself!

"You are pale, Lucy," said he, mournfully, "and your cheek is much thinner than it was when I first saw you—when I first saw you! Ah! would for your sake that that had never been: Your spirits were light then, Lucy. Your laugh came from the heart,—your step spurned the earth. Joy broke from your eyes, every thing that breathed around you seemed full of happiness and mirth; and now, look upon me, Lucy: lift those soft eyes, and teach them to flash upon me indignation and contempt! Oh, not thus, not thus! I could leave you happy,—yes, literally *blest*,—if I could fancy you less forgiving, less gentle, less angelic!"

"What have I to forgive?" said Lucy, tenderly.

"What! every thing for which one human being can pardon another. Have not deceit and injury been my crimes against you? Your peace of mind, your serenity of heart, your buoyancy of temper, have I marred *these* or not?"

"Oh, Clifford!" said Lucy, rising from herself and from all selfish thoughts, "why,—why will you not trust me? You do not know me, indeed you do not—you are ignorant even of the very nature of a woman, if you think me unworthy of your confidence? Do you believe I could betray it? or, do you think, that if you had done that for which all the world forsake you, *I* could forsake it?"

Lucy's voice filtered at the last words, but it sank as a stone sinks into deep waters, to the very core of Clifford's heart. Transported from all resolution and all fortification, he wound his arms around her in one long and impassioned caress; and Lucy, as her breath mingled with his, and her cheek dropped upon his bosom, did indeed feel as if the past could contain no secret powerful enough even to weaken the affection

with which her heart clung to his. She was the first to extricate herself from their embrace. She drew back her face from his, and smiling on him through her tears, with a brightness that the smiles of her earliest youth had never surpassed, she said,—

"Listen to me. Tell me your history or not, as you will. But believe me, a woman's wit is often no despicable counsellor. They who accuse themselves the most bitterly, are not often those whom it is most difficult to forgive, and you must pardon me, if I doubt the extent of the blame you would so lavishly impute to yourself. I am now alone in the world—(here the smile withered from Lucy's lips).—My poor father is dead. I can injure no one by my conduct; there is no one on earth to whom I am bound by duty. I am independent, I am rich. You *profess* to love me. I am foolish and vain, and I believe you. Perhaps, also, I have the fond hope which so often makes dupes of women—the hope, that, if you have erred, I may reclaim you; if you have been unfortunate, I may console you! I know, Mr. Clifford, that I am saying that for which many would despise me, and for which, perhaps, I ought to despise myself; but there are times when we speak only as if some power at our hearts constrained us, despite ourselves,—and it is thus that I have now spoken to you."

It was with an air very unwonted to herself that Lucy had concluded her address, for her usual characteristic was rather softness than dignity; but, as if to correct the meaning of her words, which might otherwise appear unkindly, there was a chaste, a proud, yet not the less a tender and sweet propriety and dignified frankness in her look and manner; so that it would have been utterly impossible for one who heard her not to have done justice to the nobleness of her motives, or not to have felt both

touched and penetrated, as much by respect as by any warmer or more familiar feeling.

Clifford, who had risen while she was speaking, listened with a countenance that varied at every word she uttered:—now all hope—now all despondency. As she ceased, the expression hardened into a settled and compulsive resolution.

"It is well!" said he, mutteringly. "I am worthy of this—very—very worthy! Generous, noble girl! Had I been an emperor, I would have bowed down to you in worship; but to debase, to degrade you—no! no!"

"Is there debasement in love?" murmured Lucy.

Clifford gazed upon her with a sort of enthusiastic and self-gratulatory pride; perhaps he felt to be thus loved, and by such a creature, *was* matter of pride, even in the lowest circumstances to which he could ever be exposed. He drew his breath hard, set his teeth, and answered,—

"You could love, then, an outcast, without birth, fortune, or character!—No! you believe this now, but you could not. Could you desert your country, your friends, and your home—all that you are born and fitted for!—Could you attend one over whom the sword hangs, through a life subjected every hour to discovery and disgrace?—Could you be subjected yourself to the moodiness of an evil memory, and the gloomy silence of remorse?—Could you be the victim of one who has no merit but his love for you, and who, if that love destroy you, becomes utterly redeemed? Yes, Lucy, I was wrong—I will do you justice: all this, nay more, you *could* bear, and your generous nature would disdain the sacrifice? But am I to be all selfish, and you all devoted? Are you to yield every thing to me, and I to accept every thing and yield none?—Alas! I have but one good, one blessing to yield, and that is

yourself. Lucy, I deserve you; I owe you in generosity: all that you could desert for me is nothing — O God! nothing to the sacrifice I make to you! And now, Lucy, I have seen you, and I must once more bid you farewell! I am on the eve of quitting this country for ever. I shall enlist in a foreign service. Perhaps — and Clifford's dark eyes flashed with hope — you will yet hear of me, and not blush when you hear! But — and his voice faltered for Lucy, holding her thus with both hands, gave way to her tears and agitation — but, in one moment, you have conquered. I had believed that you could never be mine — that my past life had for ever deprived me of that hope! I

now begin, with a rapture that can bear me through all ordeals, to form a more daring vision. A soul may be effaced — an evil name may be redeemed — the past is not set and sealed, without the power of revoking what has been written. If I can win the right of meriting your mercy, I will throw myself on it without reserve; till then, or till death, you will see me no more!"

He dropped on his knee, left his kiss and his tears upon Lucy's cold hand; the next moment she heard his step on the stairs, — the door closed heavily and jarringly upon him, — and Lucy felt one bitter pang, and, for some time at least, she felt no more!

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Many things fall between the cup and the lip!

Your man does please me

With his conceit.

Comes Chanson Hugh accounted as you see

Disguised!

And thus am I to end the constable?

Now have among you for a touch at arms.

High constable was more, though

Hailed Dick Tator by the name."

Ben Jonson: *Tale of a Tub*.

MEANWHILE Clifford strode rapidly through the streets which surrounded the judge's house, and, turning to an obscure quarter of the town, entered a gloomy lane or alley. Here he was promptly arrested by a man wrapped in a shaggy great coat, and of more than a suspicious appearance.

"Ah, captain!" said he, "you are beyond your time, but all's well!"

Answering, with indifferent ease, the easy self-possession which generally marked his address to his companions, Clifford, repeating the stranger's words, replied, —

"All's well! — what! are the prisoners released?"

"No, faith!" answered the man, with a rough laugh, "not yet; but all in good time; it is a little too much to expect the justices to do our work, though, by the Lord Harry, we often do theirs!"

"What then?" asked Clifford, impatiently.

"Why, the poor fellows had been carried to the town of —, and brought before the queer cullin* ere

I arrived, though I set off the moment you told me, and did the journey in four hours. The examination lasted all yesterday, and they were remanded till to-day;—let's see, it is not yet noon; we may be there before it's over."

"And this is what you call well!" said Clifford, angrily!

"No, captain, don't be glimflashey! you have not heard all yet!—It seems that the only thing buffed hard against them was by a stout grazier, who was cried 'Stand!' to, some fifty miles off the town; so the queer cuffin thinks of sending the poor fellows to the gaol of the county where they did the business!"

"Ah! that may leave some hopes for them!—We must look sharp to their journey; if they once get to prison, their only chances are the file and the bribe. Unhappily, neither of them is so lucky as myself at that trade!"

"No, indeed, there is not a stone wall in England that the great Captain Lovett could not creep through, I'll swear!" said the admiring satellite.

"Saddle the horses and load the pistols!—I will join you in ten minutes. Have my farmer's dress ready, the false hair, &c. Choose your own trim. Make haste;—the Three Feathers is the house of meeting."

"And in ten minutes only, captain!"

"Punctually!"

"The stranger turned a corner, and was out of sight. Clifford, muttering—"Yes, I was the cause of their apprehension; it was I who was sought; it is but fair that I should strike a blow for their escape, before I attempt my own,"—continued his course till he came to the door of a public-house. The sign of a seaman swung aloft, portraying the jolly tar with a fine pewter pot in his hand, considerably bigger than his own circumference. An immense pug sat at

the door, lolling its tongue out, as if, having stuffed itself to the tongue, it was forced to turn that useful member out of its proper place. The shutters were half closed, but the sounds of coarse merriment issued jovially forth.

Clifford disconcerted the pug; and, crossing the threshold, cried, in a loud tone, "Janseen!"—"Here!" answered a gruff voice; and Clifford, passing on, came to a small parlour adjoining the tap. There, seated by a round oak-table, he found mine host, a red, fierce, weather-beaten, but bloated looking personage, like Dirk Hatteraick in a dropsy.

"How now, captain!" cried he, in a guttural accent, and interlarding his discourse with certain Dutch graces, which, with our reader's leave, we will omit, as being unable to spell them: "how now!—not gone yet!"

"No!—I start for the coast to-morrow; business keeps me to-day. I came to ask if Mellon may be fully depended on!"

"Ay—honest to the back-bone."

"And you are sure that, in spite of my late delays, he will have not have left the village?"

"Sure!—what else can I be!—don't I know Jack Mellon these twenty years! He would lie like a log in a calm for ten months together, without moving a hair's breadth, if he was under orders."

"And his vessel is swift and well manned, in case of an officer's chase?"

"The Black Molly swift!—Ask your grandmother." The Black Molly would outstrip a shark."

"Then good-by, Janseen; there is something to keep your pipe alight: we shall not meet within the three seas again, I think. England is as much too hot for me as Holland for you!"

"You are a capital fellow!" cried mine host, shaking Clifford by the hand; "and when the lads come to know their loss, they will know they

have lost the bravest and truest gill that ever took to the toby ; so, good-by, and be good to you."

With this vocabulary benediction, mine host released Clifford ; and the robust hastened to his appointment at the Three Feathers.

He found all prepared. He hastily put on his disguise, and his follower led out his horse, a noble animal of the great fresh blood, of remarkable strength and bone, and, save only that it was somewhat *sharp* in the quarters (a fault which they who look for speed as well as grace will easily forgive), of almost unparalleled beauty in its symmetry and proportions. Well did the courier know, and proudly did it render homage to, its master ; snuffing impatiently and rearing from the head of an attendant *colley*, the sagacious animal freed itself of the rein and as it tossed its long mane in the breeze of the fresh air, came trotting to the place where Clifford stood.

"So he, Robin!"—so he!—what, then, chafes that I have left thy fellow behind at the Red Cave. Hark we may never see more. But, while I have life, I will not leave thee, Robin."

With these words, the robber fondly struck the shining neck of his favourite steed ; and as the animal returned the caress, by rubbing his head against the hands and the athletic breast of his master, Clifford felt at his heart some hint of that old racy stir of the blood which had been once to him the chief charm of his criminal profession, and which, in the late change of his feelings, he had almost forgotten.

"Well, Robin, well," he renewed, as he kissed the face of his steed ;—"well, we will have some days like our old ones yet ; then shalt see ha ha" to the trumpet, and hear thy master along on more glorious enterprises than he has yet thanked thee

for sharing. Thou wilt now be my only faithful,—my only friend, Robin ; we two shall be strangers in a foreign land. But thou wilt make thyself welcome easier than thy lord, Robin ; and thou wilt forget the old days, and thine old comrades, and thine old loves, when—ha!" and Clifford turned abruptly to his attendant, who addressed him, "It is late, you say, true? look you, it will be unwise for us both to quit London together ; you know the sixth milestone, join me there, and we can proceed in company."

Not unwilling to linger for a parting cup, the comrade assented to the prudence of the plan proposed ; and, after one or two additional words of caution and advice, Clifford mounted and rode from the yard of the inn. As he passed through the tall wooden gates into the street, the imperfect gleam of the wintry sun falling over himself and his steed, it was scarcely possible, even in spite of his disguise and rude garb, to conceive a more gallant and striking specimen of the lawless and daring tribe to which he belonged, the height, strength, beauty, and exquisite *grooming* visible in the steed, the sparkling eye, the bold profile, the sinewy chest, the graceful limbs, and the careless and practised horsemanship of the rider.

Looking after his chief with a long and an admiring gaze, the robber said to the ostler of the inn, an aged and withered man, who had seen nine generations of highwaymen rise and vanish,—

"There, Joe, when did you ever look on a hero like that? The bravest heart, the frankest hand, the best judge of a horse, and the handsomest man that ever did honour to Hounslow."

"For all that," returned the ostler, shaking his palsied head, and turning back to the tap-room,— "For all that, master, his time be up. Mark my words, Captain Lovett will not be

over the year,—no! nor mayhap the month!"

"Why, you old rascal, what makes you so wise! You will not peach, I suppose!"

"I peach! devil a bit! But there never was the gentleman of the road, great or small, knowing or stupid, as outlived his seventh year. And this will be the captain's seventh, come the 21st of next month; but he be a fine chap, and I'll go to his hanging!"

"Pish!" said the robber, peevishly,—he himself was verging towards the end of his sixth year,—*"pish!"*

"Mind, I tell it you, master; and somehow or other I think,—and I has experience in these things,—by the *sey** of his eye, and the drop of his lip, that the captain's time will be up *to-day!*"

Here the robber lost all patience, and pushing the hoary boder of evil against the wall, he turned on his heel, and sought some more agreeable companion to share his stirrup-cup.

It was in the morning of the day following that in which the above conversations occurred, that the sagacious Augustus Tomlinson and the valorous Edward Pepper, handcuffed and fettered, were joggling along the road in a postchaise, with Mr. Nabhem squeezed in by the side of the former, and two other gentlemen in Mr. Nabhem's confidence mounted on the box of the chaise, and interfering sadly, as Long Ned growlingly remarked, with "the beauty of the prospect."

"Ah, well!" quoth Nabhem, unavoidably thrusting his elbow into Tomlinson's side, while he drew out his snuff-box, and helped himself largely to the intoxicating dust. "You had best prepare yourself, Mr. Pepper, for a *change* of prospects. I

believe as how here is little to please you in *quod* (prison)."

"Nothing makes men so facetious as misfortune to others!" said Augustus, moralising, and turning himself, as well as he was able, in order to deliver his body from the painted elbow of Mr. Nabhem. "When a man is down in the world, all the bystanders, very dull fellows before, suddenly become wits!"

"You reflects on I," said Mr. Nabhem: "well, it does not sinnify a pin, for directly we does our duty, you chaps become howdaciously ungrateful!"

"Ungrateful!" said Pepper: "what a plague have we got to be grateful for! I suppose you think we ought to tell you, you are the best friend we have, because you have *scrouged* us, neck and crop, into this horrible hole, like turkeys fattened for Christmas. 'Sdeath! one's hair is flatted down like a pancake; and as for one's legs, you had better cut them off at once than tuck them up in a place a foot square,—to say nothing of these blackguardly irons!"

"The only irons pardonable in your eyes, Ned," said Tomlinson, "are the curling-irons, eh!"

"Now if this is not too much!" cried Nabhem, crossly; "you objects to go in a cart like the rest of your profession; and when I puts myself out of the way to obledge you with a shay, you slangs I for it!"

"Peace, good Nabhem!" said Augustus, with a sage's dignity; "you must allow a little bad humour in men so unhappily situated as we are."

The soft answer turneth away wrath. Tomlinson's answer softened Nabhem; and, by way of conciliation, he held his snuff-box to the nose of his unfortunate prisoner. Shutting his eyes, Tomlinson long and earnestly sniffed up the luxury, and as soon as, with his own kerchief of spotted yellow

* A word difficult to translate; but the closest interpretation of which is perhaps, "*the air*."

the officer had wiped from the proboscis some lingering grains, Tomlinson thus spoke :

"You are no more, Mr. Nabben, in a state of broken-down opposition ; but our spirits are not broken too. In our time we have had something to do with the administration ; and our comfort at present, is the comfort of *being in business* !"

"Other you were in the Methodist line before you took to the road ?" said Nabben.

"Not so !" answered Augustus, gravely. "We were the Methodists of politics, not of the church ; viz., we lived upon our flock without a legal authority to do so, and that which the law withheld from us, our wits gave. But tell me, Mr. Nabben, are you addicted to politics ?"

"Why, they says I be," said Mr. Nabben, with a grin, "and for my part, I think all who serves the King should stand up for him, and take care of their little families !"

"You speak what others think !" answered Tomlinson, smiling also. "And I will now, show you like politics, point out to you what I dare say you have not observed before."

"What be that ?" said Nabben.

"A wonderful likeness between the life of the gentleman adorning his Majesty's senate and the life of the gentleman whom you are conducting to his Majesty's gaol."

THE LIBELLIOUS PARCIEL OF AUGUSTUS TOMLINSON.

"We enter our career, Mr. Nabben, as good sundry individuals enter parliament,—by bribery and corruption. There is this difference,—indeed, between the two cases :—we are entitled to enter by the bribery and corruption of others,—they enter spontaneously by dint of their own. At first deluded by romantic visions, we like the glory of our career better than the profit, and in our youthful

generosity we profess to attack the rich solely from consideration for the poor ! By and by, as we grow more hardened, we laugh at these boyish dreams,—peasant or prince fares equally at our impartial hands ; we grasp at the bucket, but we scorn not the thimble-full ; we use the word glory only as a trap for proselytes and apprentices ; our fingers, like an office door, are open for all that can possibly come into them : we consider the wealthy as our salary, the poor as our perquisites. What is this, but a picture of your member of parliament reposing into a minister,—your patriot mellowing into your placeman ! And mark me, Mr. Nabben ! is not the very language of both as similar as the deeds ! What is the phrase either of us loves to employ !—'To deliver.' What !—'The Public.' And do we not both invariably deliver it of the same thing !—viz., its *purse* ! Do we want an excuse for sharing the gold of our neighbours, or abusing them, if they resist ! Is not our mutual—our pathos plea—'Distress' ! True, your patriot calls it 'distress of the country,' but does he ever, a whit more than we do, mean any distress but his own ! When we are brought low, and our coats are shabby, do we not both shake our heads and talk of 'reform' ! And when—oh ! when we are up in the world, do we not both kick 'reform' to the devil ! How often your parliament man 'vacates his seat,' only for the purpose of resuming it with a weightier purse ! How often, dear Ned, have our seats been vacated for the same end ! Sometimes, indeed, he really finishes his career by accepting the hundreds,—it is by 'accepting the hundreds' that ours may be finished too !—(Ned drew a long sigh.)—Note us now, Mr. Nabben, in the zenith of our prosperity—we have filled our pockets, we have become great in the mouths of our party. Our pals admire us, and

our blowens adore! What do we in this short-lived summer! Save and be thrifty? Ah, no! we must give our dinners, and make light of our lish. We sport horses on the race course, and look big at the multitude we have bubbled. Is not this your minister come into office? Does not this remind you of his equipage, his palace, his plate? In both cases, lightly won, lavishly wasted; and the public, whose cash we have fingered, may at least have the pleasure of gaping at the figure we make with it! This, then, is our harvest of happiness; our foes, our friends, are ready to eat us with envy—yet what is so little enviable as our station? Have we not both our common vexations and our mutual disquietudes? Do we not both bribe—(Nabhem shook his head and buttoned his waistcoat)—our enemies, cajole our partisans, bully our dependants, and quarrel with our only friends, viz., ourselves? Is not the secret question with each—‘It is all confoundedly fine; but how long will it last?’ Now, Mr. Nabhem, note me,—reverse the portrait: we are fallen, our career is over—the road is shut to us, and new plunderers are robbing the carriages that once we robbed. Is not this the lot of—no, no! I deceive myself! Your ministers, your jobmen, for the most part milk the popular cow while there’s a drop in the udder. Your chancellor declines on a pension,—your minister attenuates on a grant,—the feet of your great rogues may be gone from the treasury benches, but they have their little fingers in the treasury. Their past services are remembered by his Majesty,—ours only noted by the Recorder: they save themselves, for they hang by one another; we go to the devil, for we hang by ourselves: we have our little day of the public, and all is over; but it is *never* over with them. We both hunt the same fox: but we are your fair riders: they are

your knowing ones—we take the leap, and our necks are broken: they sneak through the gates, and keep it up to the last!”

As he concluded, Tomlinson’s head drooped on his bosom, and it was easy to see that painful comparisons, mingled perhaps with secret murmurs at the injustice of fortune, were rankling in his breast. Long Ned sat in gloomy silence; and even the hard heart of the severe Mr. Nabhem was softened by the affecting parallel to which he had listened. They had proceeded without speaking for two or three miles, when Long Ned, fixing his eyes on Tomlinson, exclaimed,—

“Do you know, Tomlinson, I think it was a burning shame in Lovett to suffer us to be carried off like muttens, without attempting to rescue us by the way! It is all his fault that we are here! for it was he whom Nabhem wanted, not us!”

“Very true,” said the cunning policeman; “and if I were you, Mr. Pepper, hang me if I would not behave like a man of spirit, and shew as little concern for him as he shews for you! Why, Lord now, I do can’t want to ‘tice you; but this I *does* know, the ‘ustices are very anxious to catch Lovett; and one who gives him up, and says a word or two about his cracter, so as to make conviction sertain, may himself be sertain of a free pardon for all little spees and so forth!”

“Ah!” said Long Ned, with a sigh, “that is all very well, Mr. Nabhem, but I’ll go to the crap like a gentleman, and not peach of my comrades; and now I think of it, Lovett could scarcely have assisted us. One ‘man alone, even Lovett, clever as he is, could not have forced us out of the clutches of you and your myrmidons, Mr. Nabhem! And when we were once at —, they took excellent care of us. But tell me now, my dear Nabhem,” and Long

Ned's voice whistled itself into something like softness:—"tell me, do you think the grazier will buff it better?"

"No doubt of that," said the unmoved Nabbem. Long Ned's face fell. "And what if he does?" said he. "they can't but transport us!"

"Don't deceive yourself, Master Pepper," said Nabbem. "you're too old a hand for the herring pond. They're resolved to make gallows *apart* of all such numprels (*Nun* *pupils* as you.)"

Ned cast a sullen look at the officer.

"A pretty comforter you are!" said he. "I have been in a postchaise with a pleasant fellow, I'll swear! You may call me an apple if you will, but I take it, I am not an apple you'd like to see *peeled*."

With this prophetic and menacing path, the long by here relapsed into *nothing but a plume*.

One track there were now entering a road skirted on one side by a common of some extent, and on the other, by a thick hedge, which through its broader parts occasional glimpses of woodland and fallow, interspersed with cross roads and tiny brooklets.

"There goes a jolly fellow!" said Nabbem, pointing to an athletic-looking man, riding before the carriage, dressed in a farmer's garb, and mounted on a large and powerful horse of the Irish breed. "I day say he is well acquainted with your grazier, Mr. Tomlinson; he looks mortal like one of the same kidney, and here comes another chap"—as the stranger was joined by a short, stout, ruddy man in a carters' frock, riding on a horse less showy than his comrade's, but of the lengthy, rosy, back, yet muscular race, which a knowing jockey would like to bet on:—"Now that's what I call a comely lad!" exclaimed Nabbem, pointing to the latter horseman, "none of your thin faced, dark, strapping fellows

like that Captain Lovett, as the blowens raves about, but a nice, tight, little body, with a face like a carrot! That's a beauty for my money; honesty's stamped on his face. Mr. Tomlinson! I dare says—and the officer grinned, for he had been a lad of the cross in his own day)—I dare says, poor innocent booby, he knows none of the ways of Lunnun town; and if he has not as merry a life as some folks, mayhap he may have a longer. But a merry one for ever, for such lads as us, Mr. Pepper! I say, has you heard as how Bill Fang went to Scratchland (Scotland) and was stretched for smashing queer screens' (i.e. hung for uttering forged notes). He died 'nation game; for when his father, who was a grey-headed parson, came to see him after the sentence, he says to the governor, says he, 'Give us a tip, old 'un, to pay the expenses, and die decently.' The parson forks him out ten shiners, preaching all the while like winkoy. Bob drops one of the guineas between his fingers, and says, 'Hoila, dad, you have only tipped us nine of the yellow boys; just now you said as how it was ten!' On this the parish bull, who was as poor as if he'd been a mouse of the church instead of the curate, lugs out another, and Bob, turning round to the gaoler, cries, 'Flung the governor out of a guinea, by G—d!' Now, that's what I call **keeping it up to the last!**"

Mr. Nabbem had scarcely finished this anecdote, when the farmer-like stranger, who had kept up by the side of the chaise, suddenly rode to the window, and, touching his hat, said in a Norfolk accent, "Were the gentlemen we met on the road belonging to your party? They were asking after a chaise and pair."

"No!" said Nabbem, "there be no gentlemen as belongs to our party!"

So saying, he tipped a knowing wink at the farmer, and glanced over his shoulder at the prisoners.

"What! you are going all alone!" said the farmer.

"Ay, to be sure," answered Nabhem; "not much danger, I think, in the day-time, with the sun out as big as a sapphire, which is as big as ever I seed him in this country!"

At that moment, the shorter stranger, whose appearance had attracted the praise of Mr. Nabhem (that personage was himself very short and ruddy), and who had hitherto been riding close to the post horses, and talking to the officers on the box, suddenly threw himself from his steed, and in the same instant that he arrested the horses of the chaise, struck the postilion to the ground with a short heavy bludgeon which he drew from his frock. A whistle was heard and answered, as if by a signal: three fellows, armed with bludgeons, leaped from the hedge; and in the interim the pretended farmer, dismounting, flung open the door of the chaise, and seizing Mr. Nabhem by the collar, swung him to the ground with a celerity that became the circular rotundity of the policeman's figure, rather than the deliberate gravity of his dignified office.

Rapid and instantaneous as had been this work, it was not without a check. Although the policemen had not dreamed of a rescue in the very face of the day, and on the high road, their profession was not that which suffered them easily to be surprised. The two guardians of the dieky leaped nimbly to the ground; but before they had time to use their fire-arms, two of the new aggressors, who had appeared from the hedge, closed upon them, and bore them to the ground: while this scuffle took place, the farmer had disarmed the prostrate Nabhem, and giving him in charge

to the remaining confederate, extricated Tomkinson and his comrade from the chaise.

"Hast!" said he, in a whisper, "beware my name; my disguise hides me at present—lean on me—only through the hedge, a cart waits there, and you are safe!"

With these broken words he assisted the robbers, as well as he could, in spite of their manacles, through the same part of the hedge from which the three allies had sprung. They were already through the barrier; only the long legs of Ned Pepper lingered behind; when at the far end of the road, which was perfectly straight, a gentleman's carriage became visible. A strong hand from the interior of the hedge seizing Pepper, dragged him through, and Clifford—for the reader need not be told who was the farmer—perceiving the approaching reinforcement, shouted at once for flight. The robber who had guarded Nabhem, and who indeed was no other than Old Bags, slow as he habitually was, lost not an instant in providing for himself; before you could say "Laudamus," he was on the other side of the hedge: the two men engaged with the police-officers were not capable of an equal celerity; but Clifford, throwing himself into the contest and engaging the policemen, gave the robbers the opportunity of escape. They scrambled through the fence, the officers, tough fellows and keen, clinging lustily to them, till one was felled by Clifford, and the other catching against a stump, was forced to relinquish his hold; he then sprang back into the road and prepared for Clifford, who now, however, occupied himself rather in fugitive than warlike measures. Meanwhile, the moment the other rescuers had passed the Rubicon of the hedge, their flight, and that of the gentlemen who had passed before them, com

menced. On this mystic side of the hedge was a cross-road, striking at once through an intricate and wooded part of the country, which allowed speedily and ample opportunities of dispersion. Here a light cart, drawn by two swift horses, in a tandem fashion, sought the fugitives. Long Ned and Augustine were stowed down at the bottom of this vehicle; three fellows took away at their trons, and a fourth, who had hitherto remained motionless with the cart, gave the lead—and he gave it handsomely—to the runners. A way marked the equipment; and there was witnessed a flight, not memorable in the annals of the best and long-quoted as one of the boldest and most daring exploits that almost enterprise ever accomplished.

Clifford and his equestrian comrade only remained in the field, or rather the road; the former sprang at once on his horse, the latter was not long in following the example. But the policeman, who it has been said, balked in denouncing the fugitives of the hedge, had leaped back into the road, was not idle in the meanwhile. When he saw Clifford about to mount, instead of attempting to seize the quarry, he hurried to his pistol, which in the late struggle had to hand he had been unable to use, and taking care aim at Clifford, whom he judged at once to be the leader of the runner, he bulged a ball in the right side of the rider, at the very moment he had set spurs in his horse and turned to fly. Clifford's head drooped

to the saddle bow. Fiercely the horse sprang on; the robber endeavoured, despite his reeling senses, to retain his seat—once he raised his head—once he nerved his slackened and listless limbs—and then, with a faint groan, he fell to the earth. The horse bounded but one step more, and, true to the tutorage it had received, stopped abruptly. Clifford raised himself with great dexterity on one arm, with the other hand he drew forth a pistol; he pointed it deliberately towards the officer that wounded him; the man stood motionless, cowering and spell-bound, beneath the glaring eye of the robber. It was but for a moment that the man had cause for dread, for muttering between his ground teeth, "Why waste it on an enemy?" Clifford turned the muzzle towards the head of the unconscious steed, which seemed sorrowfully and wistfully to incline towards him. "Then," he said, "whom I have fed and loved shalt never know hardship from another!" and with a merciful cruelty he dragged himself one pace nearer to his beloved steed, uttered a well-known word, which brought the docile creature to his side, and placing the muzzle of the pistol close to his ear he fired, and fell back senseless at the exertion. The animal staggered, and dropped down dead.

Meanwhile Clifford's comrade, profiting by the surprise and sudden pause of the officer, was already out of reach, and darting across the common, he and his ragged courser speedily vanished.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“ Lose I not
 With him what fortune could in life allot ?
 Lose I not hope, life's cordial ?

• • • • •
 In fact, the lessons he from prudence took
 Were written in his mind as in a book.
 There what to do he read, and what to shun,
 And all commanded was with promptness done :
 He seemed without a passion to proceed,

• • • • •
 Yet some believed those passions only slept !”

CRABBE.

• • • • •
 “ Relics of love and life's enchanted spring !”

A. WATTS, on burning a *Packet of Letters*.

• • • • •
 “ Many and sad and deep
 Were the thoughts folded in thy silent breast !
 Thou, too, couldst watch and weep !”

MRS. HEMANS.

WHILE Sir William Brandon was pursuing his ambitious schemes, and, notwithstanding Lucy's firm and steady refusal of Lord Mauleverer, was still determined on that ill-assorted marriage; while Mauleverer himself, day after day, attended at the judge's house, and, though he spoke not of love, looked it with all his might; it became obvious to every one but the lover and the guardian, that Lucy herself was rapidly declining in appearance and health. Ever since the day she had last seen Clifford, her spirit, before greatly shattered, had refused to regain even a likeness to their naturally cheerful and happy tone. She became silent and abstracted; even her gentleness of temper altered at times into a moody and fretful humour. Neither to books nor music, nor any art by which time is beguiled, she recurred for a momentary alleviation of the bitter feel-

ings at her heart, or for a transient forgetfulness of their sting. The whole world of her mind had been shaken. Her pride was wounded; her love galled; her faith in Clifford gave way at length to gloomy and dark suspicion. Nothing, she now felt, but a name as well as fortunes utterly abandoned, could have justified him for the stubbornness of heart in which he had fled and deserted her. Her own self-acquittal no longer consoled her in affliction. She condemned herself for her weakness, from the birth of her ill-starred affection to the crisis it had now acquired. “ Why did I not wrestle with it at first ?” she said bitterly. “ Why did I allow myself so easily to love one unknown to me, and equivocal in station, despite the cautions of my uncle and the whispers of the world ?” Alas ! Lucy did not remember, that at the time she was guilty of this weakness she

had not learned to reason as she since reasoned. Her faculties were but imperfectly awakened, her experience of the world was utter ignorance. She scarcely knew that she loved, and she knew not at all that the delicious and excited sentiment which filled her being could ever become as productive of evil and peril as it had done now; and even had her reason been more developed, and her resolutions more strong, does the exertion of reason and resolution always avail against the master passion? Love, it is true, is not unconquerable; but how few have ever, mind and soul, resisted the conquest? Disappointment makes a vow, but the heart reminds it not. Or in the noble image of one who has so tenderly and so truly portrayed the feelings of her own sex, —

————— "We make

A better of our thoughts where angels step,
But sleep ourselves at the foot!"

Before Clifford had last seen her, we have observed that Lucy had (and it was a consolation) clung to the belief that, despite of apparitions and her own confusion, her past life had not been such as to place him without the pale of her just afflictions; and there were frequent moments when, remembering that the death of her father had removed the only being who could assert an answerable claim to the distraction of her nervous system, she thought that Clifford, hearing her hand, was utterly at her own disposal, might again appear. And again, ere a suit which she felt so few circumstances could induce her to deny. All this half-acknowledged yet earnest train of reasoning and hope vanished from the moment he had quitted her uncle's house. His words bore no misinterpretation. He had not yielded even to her own condemnation, and her cheek burnt as

she recalled it. Yet he loved her. She saw, she knew it in his every word and look! Bitter, then, and dark must be that remorse which could have conquered every argument but that which urged him to leave her, when he might have claimed her for ever. True, that when his letter formerly bade her farewell, the same self-accusing language was resorted to, the same dark hints and allusions to infamy or guilt, yet never till now had she interpreted them rigidly, and never till now had she dreamed how far their meaning could extend. Still, what crimes could he have committed? The true ones never occurred to Lucy. She shuddered to ask herself, and hushed her doubts in a gloomy and torpid silence! But through all her accusations against herself, and through all her awakened suspicions against Clifford, she could not but acknowledge that something noble and not unworthy of her mingled in his conduct, and occasioned his resistance to her and to himself; and this belief, perhaps, irritated even while it touched her, and kept her feelings in a perpetual struggle and conflict, which her delicate frame and soft mind were little able to endure. When the nerves once break, how breaks the character with them! How many asclepias, withered and seared, do we meet in the world, who but for one shock to the heart and form might have erred on the side of goodness! Whether it come from vice or disease, the stroke which mows a single fibre plays strange havoc with the mind. Slaves we are to our muscles, and puppets to the spring of the capricious blood; and the great soul, with all its capacities, its solemn attributes, and sounding claims, is while on earth, but a jest to this marionet-like the body—from the dream which toys with it for an hour, to the binary which shivers it into a driverless, laughing as it plays with

* "The History of the Lyre," by L. R. L.

its own fragments, and reeling benighted and blinded to the grave!

We have before said, that Lucy was fond both of her uncle and his society; and still, whenever the subject of Lord Mauleverer and his suit was left untouched, there was that in the conversation of Sir William Brandon which aroused an interest in her mind, engrossed and self-consuming as it had become. Sorrow, indeed, and sorrow's companion, reflection, made her more and more capable of comprehending a very subtle and intricate character. There is no secret for discovering the human heart like affliction—especially the affliction which springs from passion. Does a writer startle you with his insight into your nature, be sure that he has mourned: such lore is the alchemy of tears. Hence the insensible and almost universal confusion of idea which confounds melancholy with depth, and finds but hollow inanity in the symbol of a laugh. Pitiable error! Reflection first leads us to gloom, but its next stage is to brightness. The Laughing Philosopher had reached the goal of Wisdom: Heraclitus whimpered at the starting-post. But enough for Lucy to gain even the vestibule of philosophy.

Notwithstanding the soreness we naturally experience towards all who pertinaciously arouse an unpleasant subject, and in spite therefore of Brandon's furtherance of Mauleverer's courtship, Lucy felt herself incline strangely, and with something of a daughter's affection, towards this enigmatical being; in spite, too, of all the cold and measured vice of his character,—the hard and wintry grey-ness of heart with which he regarded the welfare of others, or the substances of Truth, Honour, and Virtue,—the callousness of his fossilised affections, which no human being softened but for a moment, and no warm and

healthful impulse struck, save into an evanescent and idle flash:—in spite of this consummate obduracy and worldliness of temperament, it is not paradoxical to say that there was something in the man which Lucy found at times analogous to her own vivid and generous self. This was, however, only noticeable when she led him to talk over earlier days, and when by degrees the sarcastic lawyer forgot the present, and grew eloquent, not over the actions but the feelings of the past. He would speak to her for hours of his youthful dreams, his occupations, or his projects, as a boy. Above all, he loved to converse with her upon Warlock, its remains of ancient magnificence, the green banks of the placid river that enriched its domains, and the summer pomp of wood and heath-land, amidst which his noon-day visions had been nursed.

When he spoke of these scenes and days, his countenance softened, and something in its expression, recalling to Lucy the image of one still dearer, made her yearn to him the more. An ice seemed broken from his mind, and streams of released and gentle feelings, mingled with kindly and generous sentiment, flowed forth. Suddenly, a thought, a word, brought him back to the present—his features withered abruptly into their cold placidity or latent sneer: the seal closed suddenly on the broken spell, and, like the victim of a fairy-tale, condemned, at a stated hour, to assume another shape, the very being you had listened to seemed vanished, and replaced by one whom you started to behold. But there was one epoch of his life on which he was always silent, and that was, his first onset into the actual world—the period of his early struggle into wealth and fame. All that space of time seemed as a dark gulf, over which he had passed, and become changed at once—as a traveller landing on a strange climate may adopt,

the moment he touches its shore, its essence and its language.

All men—the most modest—have a certain feeling, but it is one which often assumes the form of a mask—pride! Brandon was, however, proud to a degree very rare in men who have thus and thus flourished in the world. Out of the wrecks of all other feelings, this Imperial emotion made one great pillar for its existence, and called the false "London." Such was the real essence of Brandon's nature: even in the blindest guesses, the smoothness of his voice, the dedication of his smile, the popular and supple grace of his manner, all else being flouted, nearly dismissed, it is true, but preserving its strength and quantum to the end it produced.

In the prison, while his character thus displayed and contradicted itself to private life, his fame was rapidly rising in public estimation. Unlike many of his brethren, the brilliant lawyer had exceeded expectation, and shown even far more conspicuously in the less conventionally adorned dress of the judge. Every body—and Brandon's political violence had, despite his personal affability, made him many foes—was drawn into acknowledging the profundity of his legal knowledge, and in admiring the manner in which the previous limitations of his moral dignity were discharged. No jurist larger than him, no back, royal smile, guided him: even his attention never wandered from the details now subjected to his tribunal. A popular discourse of stamping on his nose the portrait of an upright judge, could scarcely have found a finer audience for its home than the names, collected, known, yet mainly unknown, of Sir William Brandon, such as it seemed in the trappings of office and from the seat of justice.

The newspapers were not slow in recording the singular capture of the

notorious Lovett. The boldness with which he had planned and executed the rescue of his comrades, joined to the suspense in which his wound for some time kept the public, as to his escape from one death by the postern gate of another, caused a very considerable ferment and excitation in the popular mind: and, to feed the impulse, the journalists were little slack in retelling every anecdote, true or false, which they could collect, touching the past adventures of the daring highwayman. Many a good story then came to light, which partook as much of the comic as the tragic; for not a single one of the robber's adventures was noted for cruelty or bloodshed; many of them betokened rather an hilarious and jovial spirit of mischievous enterprise. It seemed as if he had thought the highway a capital arena for jokes, and only robbed for the sake of winning a redundant affection for jesting. Persons felt it rather a sin to be severe with a man of so merry a disposition, and it was especially observable that not one of the ladies who had been despoiled by the robber could be prevailed on to prosecute; on the contrary, they always talked of the event as one of the most agreeable remembrances in their lives, and seemed to bear a provoking gratitude to the merely offender, rather than resentment. All the gentlemen were not, however, of so placable a temper; and two sturdy farmers, with a grudge to boot, were ready to swear, "through thick and thin," to the identity of the prisoner with a horseman who had shortly before each of them occupied for an hour in their several homesteads, robes from cotton hats, and had carried the pleasure of his society, they very generously asserted, considerably beyond a joke; so that the state of the prisoner's affairs took a very somber aspect, and the counsel—an old hand—entrusted with his cause

declared confidentially that there was not a chance. But a yet more weighty accusation, because it came from a much nobler quarter, awaited Clifford. In the robbers' cavern were found several articles answering exactly to the description of those valuables feloniously abstracted from the person of Lord Mauleverer. That nobleman attended to inspect the articles, and to view the prisoner. The former he found himself able to swear to, with a very tranquillised conscience; the latter he beheld feverish, attenuated, and in a moment of delirium, on the sick-bed to which his wound had brought him. He was at no loss, however, to recognise in the imprisoned felon the gay and conquering Clifford, whom he had once even honoured with his envy. Although his former dim and vague suspicions of Clifford were thus confirmed, the good-natured peer felt some slight compunction at appearing as his prosecutor: this compunction, however, vanished the moment he left the sick man's apartment; and, after a little patriotic conversation with the magistrates about the necessity of public duty—a theme which brought virtuous tears into the eyes of those respectable functionaries—he reentered his carriage, returned to town, and, after a lively dinner *tête-à-tête* with an old *chère amie*, who, of all her charms, had preserved only the attraction of conversation and the capacity of relishing a *salon*, Mauleverer, the very evening of his return, betook himself to the house of Sir William Brandon.

When he entered the hall, Barlow, the judge's favourite servant, met him, with rather a confused and mysterious air, and arresting him as he was sauntering into Brandon's library, informed him that Sir William was particularly engaged, but would join his lordship in the drawing-room. While Barlow was yet speaking, and

Mauleverer was bending his right ear (with which he heard the best) towards him, the library-door opened, and a man in a very coarse and ruffianly garb awkwardly bowed himself out. "So this is the particular engagement," thought Mauleverer, "a strange *Sis Pandarus*! but those *old* fellows have droll tastes."

"I may go in now, my good fellow, I suppose!" said his lordship to Barlow; and, without waiting an answer, he entered the library. He found Brandon alone, and bending earnestly over some letters which strewed his table. Mauleverer carelessly approached, and threw himself into an opposite chair. Sir William lifted his head, as he heard the movement, and Mauleverer (reckless as was that personage) was chilled and almost awed by the expression of his friend's countenance. Brandon's face was one which, however pliant, nearly always wore one pervading character—*calmness*: whether in the smoothness of social courtesy, or the austerity of his official station, or the bitter sarcasm which escaped him at no unfrequent intervals; still a certain hard and inflexible dryness stamped both his features and his air. But at this time a variety of feelings not ordinarily eloquent in the outward man struggled in his dark face, expressive of all the energy and passion of his powerful and masculine nature; there seemed to speak from his features and eyes something of shame, and anger, and triumph, and regret, and scorn. All these various emotions, which, it appears almost a paradox to assert, met in the same expression, nevertheless were so individually and almost fearfully stamped, as to convey at once their signification to the mind of Mauleverer. He glanced towards the letters, in which the writing seemed faint and discoloured by time or damp; and then once more regarding

the face of Brandon, said in rather an anxious and subdued tone;—

"Hush, Brandon! are you ill? or has any thing happened?—you alarm me!"

"I, you recognise these locks?" said Brandon in a hollow voice, and from under the letters he drew some remnants of an author's hair, and pushed them with an averted face towards Mauveverer.

The earl took them up—regarded them for a few moments—changed colour but shook his head with a negative gesture, as he laid them once more on the table.

"Your handwriting then?" renewed the judge in a yet more impressive and pointed voice, and he pointed to the letters.

Mauveverer raised one of them, and held it between his face and the lamp, so that whatever his features might have betrayed was hidden from his companion. At length he dropped the letter with an affected *nonchalance*, and said,—

"Ah, I know the writing even at this distance of time; this letter is devoted to you."

"It is,—so are all these," said Brandon, with the same voice of preternatural and strained composure. "They have come back to me after an absence of nearly twenty-five years; they are the letters she wrote to me in the days of our courtship—(here Brandon laughed scornfully)—she carried them away with her, you know where; and (a pretty kind of constancy in woman!) she kept them, it comes to her doing day!"

The subject in discussion, whatever it might be, appeared a sore one to Mauveverer; he turned uneasily on his chair, and said at length,—

"Well, poor creature! these are painful remembrances, since it turned out so unhappily; but it was not our fault, dear Brandon; we were men of the world,—we knew the value of—

of—women, and treated them accordingly!"

"Right! right! right!" cried Brandon, vehemently, laughing in a wild and loud disdain; the intense force of which it would be in vain to attempt expressing.

"Right! and faith, my lord, I repent not, nor repent."

"So, so, that's well!" said Mauveverer, still not at his ease, and hastening to change the conversation. "But, my dear Brandon, I have strange news for you! You remember that fellow Clifford, who had the insolence to address himself to your adorable niece? I told you I suspected that long friend of his of having made my acquaintance somewhat unpleasantly, and I therefore doubted of Clifford himself. Well, my dear friend, this Clifford is—whom do you think?—no other than Mr. Lovett, of Newgate celebrity!"

"You do not say so!" rejoined Brandon, apathetically, as he slowly gathered his papers together, and deposited them in a drawer.

"Indeed it is true, and what is more, Brandon, this fellow is one of the very identical highwaymen who robbed me on my road from Bath. No doubt he did me the same kind of office on my road to Mauveverer Park."

"Possibly," said Brandon, who appeared absorbed in a reverie.

"Ay!" answered Mauveverer, piqued at this indifference. "But do you not see the consequences to your niece!"

"My niece!" repeated Brandon, rousing himself.

"Certainly, I grieve to say it, my dear friend,—but she was young very young, when at Bath. She suffered this fellow to address her too openly. Say, for I will be frank, she was suspected of being in love with him!"

"She was in love with him," said Brandon dryly, and fixing the malignant coldness of his eye upon the

snitor. "And, for aught I know," added he, "she is so at this moment."

"You are cruel!" said Mauleverer, disconcerted. "I trust not, for the sake of my continued addressess."

"My dear lord," said Brandon, urbanely taking the courtier's hand, while the *aiguis in herbe* of his sneer played around his compressed lips.—"my dear lord, we are old friends, and need not deceive each other. You wish to marry my niece, because she is an heiress of great fortune, and you suppose that my wealth will in all probability swell her own. Moreover, she is more beautiful than any other young lady of your acquaintance; and, polished by your example, may do honour to your taste as well as your prudence. Under these circumstances you will, I am quite sure, look with lenity on her girlish errors, and not love her the less because her foolish fancy persuades her that she is in love with another."

"Ahem!" said Mauleverer, "you view the matter with more sense than sentiment; but look you, Brandon, we must try, for both our sakes, if possible, to keep the identity of Lovett with Clifford from being known. I do not see why it should be. No doubt he was on his guard while playing the gallant, and committed no atrocity at Bath. The name of Clifford is hitherto perfectly unsullied. No fraud, no violence are attached to the appellation; and if the rogue will but keep his own counsel, we may hang him out of the way without the secret transpiring."

"But, if I remember right," said Brandon, "the newspapers say that this Lovett will be tried some seventy or eighty miles only from Bath, and that gives a chance of recognition."

"Ay, but he will be devilishly altered, I imagine; for his wound has already been but a bad beautifier to his face: moreover, if the dog has any delicacy, he will naturally dislike to be

known as the gallant of that gay city, where he shone so successfully, and will disguise himself as well as he is able. I hear wonders of his powers of self-transformation."

"But he may commit himself on the point between this and his trial," said Brandon.

"I think of ascertaining how far that is likely, by sending my valet down to him (you know one treats these gentlemen highwaymen with a certain consideration, and hangs them with all due respect to their feelings), to hint that it will be doubtless very unpleasant to him, under his 'present unfortunate circumstances' (is not that the phrase?), to be known as the gentleman who enjoyed so deserved a popularity at Bath, and that, though 'the laws of my country compel me' to prosecute him, yet, should he desire it, he may be certain that I will preserve his secret.—Come, Brandon, what say you to that manœuvre? It will answer my purpose, and make the gentleman—for doubtless he is all sensibility—shed tears at my generous forbearance!"

"It is no bad idea," said Brandon. "I commend you for it. At all events, it is necessary that my niece should not know the situation of her lover. She is a girl of a singular turn of mind, and fortune has made her independent. Who knows but what she might commit some folly or another, write petitions to the King, and beg me to present them, or go—for she has a world of romance in her—to prison, to console him; or, at all events, she would beg my kind offices on his behalf—a request peculiarly awkward, as in all probability I shall have the honour of trying him."

"Ay, by the by, so you will. And I fancy the poor rogue's audacity will not cause you to be less severe than you usually are. They say you promise to make more human pendulums than any of your brethren."

"They do say that, do they?" said Brandon. "Well, I own I have a hole against my spouse; I loathe her face and that bad voice. *'Ruelet et noir'* is my motto; and I allow, that it is not the philosophy that makes men mortal!"

"Well, *J'accuse!* wisdom be yours!—mine be Horace's!" rejoined Mauleverer, as he poked his tooth. "but I am glad you see the absolute necessity of keeping the secret from Lucy's suspicion. She never reads the papers. I suppose?" "She never do!"

"No! and I will take care not to have them thrown in her way, and as, in consequence of my poor brother's recent death, she was indeed, but he, there is little chance should Lovett's right to the name of Clifford be humored, that it should reach her ears!"

"But those confounded servants!"

"True enough! but consider, that before she knew of the newspapers' tale, so that should it be useful, we shall have our own time to caution them. I need only say to Lucy's woman, 'A poor gentleman, a friend of old Sir Ralph's, whom your mistress used to dance with, and you must have seen—Captain Clifford—is to be married to her sister. It will shock her, poor thing! in her present state of health, to tell her of so sad an event to her father's friend; therefore be silent, as you value your place and ten pounds;'—and I may be tolerably sure of success!"

"You ought to be chairman to the 'night and morning' committee!" cried Mauleverer. "My word is now easy, and there are poor fellows as grow—*'follow from a high seat'*—we may break the matter gently to her; and as I intend them to be very respectful, very delicate, &c., she cannot but be sensible of my kindness and real attention!"

"And if a live dog be better than a dead lion," added Brandon, "surely a lord in existence will be better than a highwayman hanged!"

"According to ordinary logic," rejoined Mauleverer, "that syllogism is clear enough; and though I believe a girl may cling, now and then, to the memory of a departed lover, I do not think she will when the memory is allied with shame. Love is nothing more than vanity pleased; wound the vanity, and you destroy the love! Lucy will be forced, after having made so bad a choice of a lover, to make a good one in a husband,—in order to recover her self-esteem!"

"And therefore you are certain of her!" said Brandon, ironically.

"Thanks to my star—my garter—my ancestor, the first baron, and myself, the first earl—I hope I am," said Mauleverer, and the conversation turned. Mauleverer did not stay much longer with the judge; and Brandon, left alone, recurrd once more to the perusal of his letters.

We scarcely know what sensations it would have occasioned in one who had known Brandon only in his later years, could he have read those letters, referring to so much earlier a date. There was in the keen and arid character of the man, so little that recalled any idea of courtship or youthful gallantry, that a correspondence of that nature would have appeared almost as unnatural as the lives of plants, or the anatomy of feelings of a mineral. The correspondence now before Brandon was descriptive of various feelings, but all appertaining to the same class: none of them were apparent answers to letters from him. One while they implied similarity to expressions of tenderness, but intimated a doubt whether the writer would be able to coordinate her future happiness, and aimed for certain portions of birth and fortune, and ambitious prospects, to which she alluded: at other times, a

vein of latent coquetry seemed to pervade the style—an indescribable air of coolness and reserve contrasted former passages in the correspondence, and was calculated to convey to the reader an impression that the feelings of the lover were not altogether adequately returned. Frequently the writer, as if Brandon had expressed himself sensible of this conviction, reproached him for unjust jealousy and unworthy suspicion. And the tone of the reproach varied in each letter: sometimes it was gay and satirising; at others, soft and expostulatory; at others, gravely reasoning; and often, haughtily indignant. Still, throughout the whole correspondence, on the part of the mistress, there was a sufficient stamp of individuality to give a shrewd examiner some probable guess at the writer's character. He would have judged her, perhaps, capable of strong and ardent feeling, but ordinarily of a light and capricious turn, and seemingly prone to imagine and to resent offence. With these letters were mingled others in Brandon's writing—of how different, of how impassioned a description! All that a deep, proud, meditative, exacting character could dream of love given, or require of love returned, was poured burningly over the pages; yet they were full of reproach, of jealousy, of a nice and torturing observation, as calculated to wound as the ardour might be fitted to charm; and often the bitter tendency to disdain that distinguished his temperament broke through the fondest enthusiasm of courtship, or the softest outpourings of love. "You saw me not yesterday," he wrote in one letter, "but I saw you; all day I was by you; you gave not a look which passed me unnoticed; you made not a movement which I did not chronicle in my memory. Julia, do you tremble when I tell you this? Yea, if you have a heart, I know these

words would stab it to the core! You may affect to answer me indignantly! Wise dissembler!—it is very skilful—very, to assume anger when you have no reply. I repeat, during the whole of that party of pleasure—(pleasure! well, your tastes, it must be acknowledged, are exquisite!) which you enjoyed yesterday, and which you so faintly asked me to share, my eye was on you. You did not know that I was in the wood when you took the arm of the incomparable Digby, with so pretty a semblance of alarm at the moment the snake, which my foot disturbed, glided across your path. You did not know I was within hearing of the tent where you made so agreeable a repast, and from which your laughter sent peals so merry and so numerous. Laughter! O, Julia, can you tell me that you love and yet be happy, even to mirth, when I am away? Love! O God, how different a sensation is mine! Mine makes my whole principle of life! Yours! I tell you, that I think, at moments, I would rather have your hate than the lukewarm sentiment you bear to me, and honour by the name of 'affection.' Pretty phrase! I have *no affection* for you! Give me not that sickly word; but try with me, Julia, to invent some expression that has never filtered a paltry meaning through the lips of another! Affection! why that is a sister's word—a girl's word to her pet squirrel! never was it made for that ruby and most ripe mouth! Shall I come to your house this evening? Your mother has asked me, and you—you heard her, and said nothing. Oh! but that was maiden reserve—was it? and maiden reserve caused you to take up a book the moment I left you, as if my company made but an ordinary amusement instantly to be replaced by another! When I have seen you, society, books, food, all are hateful to me; but you, sweet Julia,

you can read can you! Why, when I left you I lingered by the parlour window for hours till dusk, and you never once lifted your eyes, nor saw me pass and repass. At least, I thought you would have watched my steps when I left the house, but I err, charming moralist! According to you, that vigilance would have been meanness."

In another part of the correspondence, a more grave, if not a deeper gush of feeling struggled for expression.

"You say, Julia, that were you to marry one who thinks so much of what he surrenders for you, and who requires from yourself so vast a return of love, you should tremble for the future happiness of both of us. Julia, the truthness of that fear proves that you love not at all. I do not tremble for our future happiness; on the contrary, the intensity of my passion for you makes me know that we never can be happy! never beyond the first rapture of our union. Happiness is a quiet and tranquil feeling. No feeling that I can possibly bear to you will ever receive those epithets,—I know that I shall be wretched and scorned when I am united to you. Start not, I will presently tell you why. But I do not dream of happiness, neither would you fathom one drop of the dark and limitless ocean of my emotions; would you name to me that word. It is not the morose, still and callous calculation of chances for 'future felicity' (what homely supplied you with so choice a term?) that enters into the heart that cherishes an all-pervading love. Passion looks only to one object, to nothing beyond,—I thirst, I consume, not for happiness, but you. Were your possession inevitably to lead me to a gulf of anguish and shame, think you I should regret it one jot the less! If you carry one thought, one hope, one dim fancy, beyond the event that

makes you mine, you may be more worthy of the esteem of others; but you are utterly undeserving of my love.

: : : :

"I will tell you now why I know we cannot be happy. In the first place, when you say that I am proud of birth, that I am morbidly ambitious, that I am anxious to shine in the great world, and that after the first intoxication of love has passed away I shall feel bitterness against one who has so humbled my pride and darkened my prospects, I am not sure that you wholly err. But I am sure that the instant remedy is in your power. Have you patience, Julia, to listen to a kind of history of myself, or rather of my feelings! if so, perhaps it may be the best method of explaining all that I would convey. You will see, then, that my family pride and my worldly ambition are not founded altogether on those basements which move my laughter in another;—if my feelings thereon are really, however, as you would insinuate, equal matter for derision, behold, my Julia, I can laugh equally at them! So pleasant a thing to me is scorn, that I would rather despise myself than have no one to despise;—but to my narrative! You must know that there are but two of us, sons of a country squire, of old family, which once possessed large possessions and something of historical renown. We lived in an old country place; my father was a convivial dog, a fox hunter, a drunkard, yet in his way a fine gentleman,—and a very respectable member of society. The first feelings towards him that I can remember were those of shame. Not much matter of family pride here, you will say! True and that is exactly the reason which made me cherish family pride elsewhere. My father's house was filled with guests, some high and some low,—they all

united in ridicule of the host. I soon detected the laughter, and you may imagine that it did not please me. Meanwhile the old huntsman, whose family was about as ancient as ours, and whose ancestors had officiated in his capacity for the ancestors of his master time out of mind, told me story after story about the Brandons of yore. I turned from the stories to more legitimate history, and found the legends were tolerably true. I learned to glow at this discovery: the pride—humbled when I remembered my sire—revived when I remembered my ancestors; I became resolved to emulate them, to restore a sunken name, and vowed a world of nonsense on the subject. The habit of brooding over these ideas grew on me; I never heard a jest broken on my paternal guardian—I never caught the maudlin look of his reeling eyes, nor listened to some exquisite inanity from his besotted lips, but what my thoughts flew instantly back to the Sir Charleses and the Sir Roberts of my race, and I comforted myself with the hope that the present degeneracy should pass away. Hence, Julia, my family pride; hence, too, another feeling you dislike in me,—disdain! I first learned to despise my father, the host, and I then despised my acquaintances, his guests; for I saw, while they laughed at him, that they flattered, and that their merriment was not the only thing offered to feed at his expense. Thus contempt grew up with me, and I had nothing to check it; for when I looked around I saw not one living thing that I could respect. This father of mine had the sense to think I was no idiot. He was proud (poor man!) of 'my talents,' viz., of prizes won at school, and congratulatory letters from my masters. He sent me to college: my mind took a leap there: I will tell you, prettiest, what it was! Before I went thither I had some fine vague visions about virtue.

I thought to revive my ancestral honours by being good; in short, I was an embryo King Pepin. I awoke from this dream at the university. There, for the first time, I perceived the real consequence of rank.

"At school, you know, Julia, boys care nothing for a lord. A good cricketer, an excellent fellow, is worth all the earls in the peerage. But at college all that ceases. Hats and bells sink into the nothingness in which corals and bells had sunk before. One grows manly, and worships coronets and carriages. I saw it was a fine thing to get a prize, but it was ten times a finer thing to get drunk with a peer. So, when I had done the first, my resolve to be worthy of my sires made me do the second—not, indeed, exactly. I never got *drunk*: my father disgusted me with that vice betimes. To his gluttony I owe my vegetable diet, and to his inebriety my addiction to water. No; I did not get drunk with peers: but I was just as agreeable to them as if I had been equally embriated. I knew intimately all the 'Hats'* in the university, and I was henceforth looked up to by the 'Caps' as if my head had gained the height of every hat that I knew. But I did not do this immediately. I must tell you two little anecdotes, that first initiated me into the secret of real greatness. The first was this: I was sitting at dinner with some fellows of a college, grave men and clever; two of them, not knowing me, were conversing about me: they heard, they said, that I should never be so good a fellow as my father,—have such a cellar, or keep such a house.

" 'I have met six earls there and a marquess,' quoth the other senior.

" 'And his son,' returned the first

* At Cambridge the sons of noblemen, and the eldest sons of baronets, are allowed to wear hats instead of the academical cap.

den, 'only keeps company with sizers, I believe!'

"So then," said I to myself, 'to deserve the patronage of clever men, one must have good wits; know plenty of facts, and foreknow secrets!'

"Nothing could be truer than my conclusion."

"Assume the second is this — on the day I gained a high university prize, I invited my friends to dine with me; three of them refused, because they were engaged (they had been asked when I asked them) — to whom? the richest man at the university. These circumstances happening at the same time, threw me into a profound misery. I awoke, and became a man of the world. I no longer resolved to be virtuous, and to hunt after the glories of poor literature and your *Albion* — I resolved to become rich, powerful, and of worldly repute."

"I altered my latest course, and, as I said before, I courted some rich 'flame.' Behold my first grand step in the world! I became the parasite and the flatterer. 'What?' would my polite squire think? 'Noddy you, my polite squire, is it? for it would not my spirit of contempt to put those fine houses to my use! it enticed me to see how easily I could acquire them, and to what a variety of purposes I could apply even the wearisome disgust of their acquaintance. Nothing is so foolish as to say the little great ones of us are; they can be put to any use whatsoever that a wise man is inclined to make of them! Well, Julia, is my character already formed? Truly, gentle, delicate, and worldly ambitious. — Come it is for you; after consideration only strengthened the impression already made. I decided, on leaving college, to go abroad; my father had no money to give me. What signified that? I looked anxiously round for some wealthier man, richer than the paternal hoard; I found it in a Lord Mauleverer; he

had been at college with me, and I endured him easily as a companion, — for he had accomplishments, wit, and good nature; I made him wish to go abroad, and I made him think he should die of *ennui* if I did not accompany him. To his request to that effect, I *reluctantly* agreed, and saw everything in Europe, which he neglected to see, at his expense. What amused me the most was the perception that I, the parasite, was respected by him; and he, the patron, was ridiculed by me! It would not have been so if I had depended on 'my virtue.' Well, sweetest Julia, the world, as I have said, gave to my college experience a sacred authority. I returned to England, and my father died, leaving to me not a sixpence, and to my brother an estate so mortgaged that he could not enjoy it, and so restricted that he could not sell it. It was now the time for me to profit by the experience I boasted of. I saw that it was necessary I should take some profession. Professions are the masks to poor pauper-raggs; they give respectability to cheating, and a diploma to feed upon others. I analysed my talents, and looked to the customs of my country; the result was my resolution to take to the bar. I had an inexhaustible power of application, I was keen, shrewd, and audacious. All these qualities 'tell' at the courts of justice. I kept my legitimate number of terms, — I was called, — I went the circuit, — I admitted not a brief — not a brief. Julia! My health, never robust, gave way beneath study and irritation; I was ordered to break myself to the country; I came to this village, as one both salubrious and obscure. I lodged in the house of your aunt, — you came thither daily, — I saw you, — you know the rest. But where, all this time, were my noble friends, you will say? Death, since we had left college, they had learned a taste of

the wisdom I had *then* possessed: they were not disposed to give some thing for nothing; they had younger brothers, and cousins, and mistresses, and, for aught I know, children to provide for. Besides, they had their own expenses: the richer a man is, the less he has to give. One of them would have bestowed on me a living, if I had gone in the church; another, a commission, if I had joined his regiment. But I knew the day was past both for priest and soldier; and it was not merely to live, no, nor to live comfortably, but to enjoy power, that I desired, so I declined these offers. Others of my friends would have been delighted to have kept me in their house, feasted me, joked with me, rode with me, and nothing more! But I had already the sense to see, that if a man dances himself into distinction, it is never by the steps of attendance. One must receive favours and court patronage, but it must be with the air of an independent man. My old friends thus rendered useless, my legal studies forbade me to make new, nay, they even estranged me from the old; for people may say what they please about a similarity of opinions being necessary to friendship, — a similarity of habits is much more so. It is the man you dine, breakfast, and lodge with, walk, ride, gamble, or thieve with, that is your friend; not the man who likes Virgil as well as you do, and agrees with you in an admiration of Handel. Meanwhile, my chief prey, Lord Mauleverer, was gone; he had taken another man's dulcinea, and sought out a bower in Italy; from that time to this, I have never heard of him nor seen him; I know not even his address. With the exception of a few stray gleanings from my brother, who, good easy man! I could plunder more, were I not resolved not to ruin the family stock, I have been thrown on myself; the result is, that, though as clever as

my fellows, I have narrowly shunned starvation: had my wants been less simple, there would have been no shunning in the case. But a man is not easily starved who drinks water, and eats by the ounce. A more effectual fate might have befallen me: disappointment, wrath, baffled hope, mortified pride, all these, which gnawed at my heart, might have consumed it long ago; I might have fretted away as a garment which the moth eateth, had it not been for that fund of obstinate and iron hardness, which nature, — I beg pardon, there is no nature, — *circumstance* bestowed upon me. This has borne me up, and will bear me yet through time, and shame, and bodily weakness, and mental fever, until my ambition has won a certain height, and my disdain of human pettiness rioted in the external sources of fortune, as well as an inward fountain of bitter and self-fed consolation. Yet, oh, Julia! I know not if even this would have supported me, if at that epoch of life, when I was most wounded, most stricken in body, most soured in mind, my heart had not met and fastened itself to yours: I saw you, loved you, and life became to me a new object. Even now, as I write to you, all my bitterness, my pride, vanish; everything I have longed for disappears; my very ambition is gone. I have no hope but for you, Julia; beautiful, adored Julia! — when I love you, I love even my kind. Oh, you know not the power you possess over me! Do not betray it: you can yet make me all that my boyhood once dreamed; or you can harden every thought, feeling, sensation, into . . . tone.

* * * * *

“I was to tell you why I look not for happiness in our union. You have now seen my nature. You have traced the history of my life, by tracing the history of my character. You see what

I surrender in gaining you. I do not deny the sacrifice. I surrender the very essentials of my present mind and soul. I cease to be worldly. I cannot raise myself, I cannot revive my industrial name; nay, I shall relinquish it for ever. I shall adopt a disguised appellation. I shall sink into another grade of life. In some remote village, by means of some humble profession than that I now follow, we must earn our subsistence, and smother ambition. I tell you frankly, Julia, when I close the eyes of my heart,—when I shut you from my gaze, this sacrifice appals me. But even then you force yourself before me, and I feel that one glance from your eye is more to me than all. If you could hear with me,—if you could soothe me,—if when a cloud is on me you could suffer it to pass away untroubled, and smile on me the moment it is gone, oh, Julia! there would be then no extreme of poverty,—no abasement of fortune,—no abandonment of early dreams which would not seem to me rapture if coupled with the bliss of knowing that you are mine. Never should my lip—never should my eye tell you that there is that thing on earth for which I repine, or which I could desire. No, Julia, could I flatter my heart with this hope you would not find me dream of unhappiness and you united. But I tremble, Julia, when I think of your temper and my own: you will conceive a gloomy look from one never mindful is an insult; and you will feel every vent of passion on Fortune or on others as a reproach to you. Then, too, you cannot enter into my nature; you cannot descend into its caverns; you cannot behold, much less can you deign to lull, the exacting and lynx-eyed jealousy that dwells there. Sweetest Julia! every breath of yours, every touch of yours, every look of yours I yearn for beyond all a mother's longing for the child that

has been torn from her for years. Your head leaned upon an old tree (do you remember it near * * *, and I went every day, after seeing you, to kiss it. Do you wonder that I am jealous? How can I love you as I do and be otherwise? My whole being is intoxicated with you!

: : : :

"This, then, your pride and mine, your pleasure in the admiration of others, your lightness, Julia, make me foresee an eternal and gushing source of torture to my mind. I care not;—I care for nothing so that you are mine, if but for one hour."

It seems that, despite the strange, sometimes the unlover-like and fiercely selfish nature of these letters from Brandon, something of a genuine tone of passion,—perhaps their originality,—aided, no doubt, by some altered eloquence of the writer, and some treacherous inclination on the part of the mistress, ultimately conquered; and that a union so little likely to receive the smile of a prosperous star was at length concluded. The letter which terminated the correspondence was from Brandon: it was written on the evening before the marriage, which, it appeared by the same letter, was to be private and concealed. After a rapturous burst of hope and joy, it continued thus:—

"Yes, Julia, I recant my words; I have no belief that you or I shall ever have cause hereafter for unhappiness. Those eyes that dwell so tenderly on mine, that hand whose pressure lingers yet in every nerve of my frame, those lips turned so coyly, yet, shall I say, reluctantly? from me, all tell me that you love me; and my fears are banished. Love, which conquered my nature, will conquer the only thing I would desire to see altered in yours. Nothing could ever make me adore you less, though you affect to dread it; nothing but a knowledge that you

are unworthy of me, that you have a thought for another,—then I should not hate you. No: the privilege of my past existence would revive; I should revel in a luxury of contempt, I should despise you, I should mock you, and I should be once more what I was before I knew you. But why do I talk thus? My bride, my blessing, forgive me!"

In concluding our extracts from this correspondence, we wish the reader to note, first, that the love professed by Brandon seems of that vehement and corporeal nature which, while it is often the least durable, is also the most susceptible of the fiercest extremes of hatred, or even of disgust. Secondly, that the character opened

by this sarcastic candour evidently required in a mistress either an utter devotion or a skilful address. And thirdly, that we have hinted at such qualities in the fair correspondent as did not seem sanguinely to promise either of those essentials.

While with a curled, yet often with a quivering, lip the austere and sarcastic Brandon slowly compelled himself to the task of proceeding through these monuments of former folly and youthful emotion, the further elucidation of those events, now rapidly urging on a fatal and dread catastrophe, spreads before us a narrative occurring many years prior to the time at which we are at present arrived.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"*Clem.* Lift the dark veil of years!—behind—what waits?

A human heart. Vast city, where reside
All glories and all villainesses!—while foul,
Yet silent, through the roar of passions rolls
The river of the Darling Sin—and bears
A life and yet a poison on its tide.

"*Clem.* Thy wife?—

Vict. Avaunt! I've changed that word to 'scorn!'

Clem. Thy child?—

Vict. Ay, that strikes home—my child—my child!"

Love and Hatred, by ———.

To an obscure town in shire, there came to reside a young couple, whose appearance and habits drew towards them from the neighbouring gossips a more than ordinary attention. They bore the name of *Welford*. The man assumed the profession of a solicitor. He came without introduction or recommendation; his manner of life bespoke poverty; his address was reserved, and even sour; and despite the notice and scrutiny with which he was regarded, he gained no

clients, and made no lawsuits. The want of all those decent *charlatanisms* which men of every profession are almost necessitated to employ, and the sudden and unshowered nature of his coming were, perhaps, the cause of this ill-success. "His house was too small," people said, "for respectability." And little good could be got from a solicitor, the very rails round whose door were so sadly in want of repainting! Then, too, Mrs. Welford made a vast number of enemies.

She was, beyond all expression, beautiful; and there was a certain coquetry in her manner which showed she was aware of her attractions. All the ladies of * * * * hated her. A few people asked on the young couple. Welford received them cordially; their invitations were unaccepted, and what was worse, they were never returned. The devil himself could not have suggested an attorney under such circumstances. Reserved—shabby—poor—indeed—introductionless—a bad house—an unpainted railing—and a beautiful wife! Nevertheless, though Welford was not employed, he was, as we have said, watched. On their first arrival, which was in summer, the young pair were often seen walking together in the fields or groves which surrounded their home. Sometimes they walked affectionately together, and it was observed with what care Welford supported his wife's cloak or shield around her slender shape, as the cool of the evening increased. But often his arm was withdrawn,—he turned behind, and they continued their walk or returned homeward in silence and apart. By degrees whispers circulated throughout the town that the new-married couple lived by no means happily. The men had the fault as the stern-looking husband, the women, on the point of a wife. However, the military regiment whom they kept declared, that though Mr. Welford did sometimes frown, and Mrs. Welford did sometimes weep, they were extremely attached to each other, and only quarrelled through awe. The maid had had four lovers, not at all, and was possibly experienced in such matters. They needed no clothes, went or from a distance; and the postman declared he had never seen a letter directed to either. Thus a kind of mystery hung over the pair, and made them still more gazed on and still more disliked—which is saying a great deal—than they would

have otherwise been. Poor as Welford was, his air and walk eminently bespoke what common persons term *gentility*. And in this he had greatly the advantage of his beautiful wife, who, though there was certainly nothing vulgar or plebeian in her aspect, altogether wanted the refinement of manner, look, and phrase, which characterized Welford. For about two years they lived in this manner and so frugally and tranquilly, that though Welford had not any visible means of subsistence, no one could well wonder in what manner they *did* subsist. About the end of that time, Welford suddenly embarked a small sum in a county speculation. In the course of this adventure, to the great surprise of his neighbours, he evinced an extraordinary turn for calculation, and his habits plainly bespoke a man both of business and ability. This disposal of capital brought a sufficient return to support the Welfords, if they had been so disposed, in rather a better style than heretofore. They remained, however, in much the same state; and the only difference that the event produced was the retirement of Mr. Welford from the profession he had embraced. He was no longer a solicitor! It must be allowed that he resigned no great advantages in this retirement. About this time some officers were quartered at * * * *; and one of them, a handsome lieutenant, was so struck with the charms of Mrs. Welford, whom he saw at church, that he lost no opportunity of testifying his admiration. It was manifestly, yet not unkindly, remarked, that though no absolute ingratiation could be detected in the manner of Mrs. Welford, she certainly seemed far from displeased with the evident homage of the young lieutenant. A blush tinged her cheek when she saw him, and the gallant conceit asserted that the blush was not always without a smile.

Emboldened by the interpretations of his vanity, and contrasting, as every one else did, his own animated face and glittering garb with the ascetic and gloomy countenance, the unstudied dress, and austere gait, which destroyed in Welford the effect of a really handsome person, our lieutenant thought fit to express his passion by a letter, which he conveyed to Mrs. Welford's pew. Mrs. Welford went not to church that day; the letter was found by a good natured neighbour, and enclosed anonymously to the husband.

Whatever, in the secrecy of domestic intercourse, took place on this event was necessarily unknown; but the next Sunday the face of Mr. Welford, which had never before appeared at church, was discerned by one vigilant neighbour—probably the anonymous friend,—not in the same pew with his wife, but in a remote corner of the sacred house. And once, when the lieutenant was watching to read in Mrs. Welford's face some answer to his epistle, the same obliging inspector declared that Welford's countenance assumed a sardonic and withering sneer that made his very blood to creep. However this be, the lieutenant left his quarters, and Mrs. Welford's reputation remained dissatisfactorily untarnished. Shortly after this the county speculation failed, and it was understood that the Welfords were about to leave the town, whither none knew,—some said to gaol; but then, unhappily, no debts could be discovered. Their bills had been "next to nothing;" but, at least, they had been regularly paid. However, before the rumoured emigration took place, a circumstance equally wonderful to the good people of * * * * occurred. One bright spring morning, a party of pleasure from a great house in the vicinity passed through that town. Most conspicuous of these

•as a young horseman, richly dressed,

and of a remarkably showy and handsome appearance. Not a little sensible of the sensation he created, this cavalier lingered behind his companions in order to eye more deliberately certain damsels stationed in a window, and who were quite ready to return his glances with interest. At this moment the horse, which was fretting itself fiercely against the rein that restrained it from its fellows, took fright at a knife-grinder, started violently to one side, and the graceful cavalier, who had been thinking, not of the attitude best adapted to preserve his equilibrium, but to display his figure, was thrown with some force upon a heap of bricks and rubbish which had long, to the scandal of the neighbourhood, stood before the paintless railings around Mr. Welford's house. Welford himself came out at the time, and felt compelled, for he was by no means one whose sympathetic emotions flowed easily, to give a glance to the condition of a man who lay motionless before his very door. The horseman quickly recovered his senses, but found himself unable to rise; one of his legs was broken. Supported in the arms of his groom he looked around, and his eye met Welford's. An instant recognition gave life to the face of the former, and threw a dark blush over the sullen features of the latter. "Heavens!" said the cavalier, "is that——"

"Hist, my lord!" cried Welford, quickly interrupting him, and glancing round. "But you are hurt,—will you enter my house?"

The horseman signified his assent, and, between the groom and Welford, was borne within the shabby door of the ex-solicitor. The groom was then despatched with an excuse to the party, many of whom were already hastening around the house; and though one or two did force themselves across the inhospitable threshold

yet so soon as they had uttered a few expletives, and felt their stare sink beneath the sudden and chilling asperity of the host, they satisfied themselves, that though it was d——d unlikely for their friend, yet they could do nothing for him at present. And promising to send to inquire after him the next day, they remounted and rode homeward, with an eye more attentive than usual to the motions of their steeds. They did not, however, depart, till the surgeon of the town had made his appearance, and declared that the patient must not on any account be moved. A host's leg was a windfall that did not happen every day to the surgeon of * * * *. All this while we may imagine the state of anxiety experienced in the town, and the agonised endurance of those rural nerves which are produced in scanty populations, and have so *Thackeray* a sympathy with the affairs of other people. One day—two days—three days—a week—a fortnight, nay, a month, passed, and the host was still the inmate of Mr. Welford's abode. Leaving the gossips to feed on their curiosity,—“*Curiosity of their own hearts*,”—we must give a glance towards the interior of the inhospitable mansion of the ex-astronaut.

It was towards evening, the sufferer was supported in a sofa, and the beautiful Mrs. Welford, who had officiated as his nurse, was placing the pillow under the shattered limb. He himself was attempting to seize her hand, which she only drew back, and uttering things sweeter and more polished than she had ever listened to before. At this moment Welford softly entered, he was unnoticed by either, and he stood at the door contemplating them with a smile of calm and self-sustaining derision. The face of *Macpherson* regarding *Marjorie* and *Faust* might suggest some idea of the picture we design to

paint, but the countenance of Welford was more lofty, as well as cooler, in character, though not less malignant in expression, than that which the incomparable *Retsch* has given to the mocking fiend. So utter, so congratulatory, so lordly was the contempt on Welford's dark and striking features, that though he was in that situation in which ridicule usually attaches itself to the husband, it was the gallant and the wife that would have appeared to the beholder in a humiliating and unenviable light.

After a momentary pause, Welford approached with a heavy step,—the wife started,—but, with a bland and smooth expression, which, since his sojourn in the town of * * * *, had been rarely visible in his aspect, the host joined the pair, smiled on the nurse, and congratulated the patient on his progress towards recovery. The nobleman, well learned in the usages of the world, replied easily and gaily, and the conversation flowed on cheerfully enough till the wife, who had sat abstracted and apart, stealing over and anon timid glances towards her husband, and looks of a softer meaning towards the patient, retired from the room. Welford then gave a turn to the conversation—he reminded the nobleman of the pleasant days they had passed in Italy,—of the adventures they had shared, and the intrigues they had enjoyed; as the conversation warmed it assumed a more free and licentious turn, and not a little we woe, would the good folks of * * * *, have been amazed could they have listened to the gay jests and the *libertine* maxims which flowed from the thin lips of that cold and severe Welford, whose countenance gave the lie to mirth. Of women in general they spoke with that lively contempt which is the customary tone with men of the world,—only in Welford it assumed a kinder, a deeper and a more philosophical cast, th

it did, in his more animated yet less energetic guest.

The nobleman seemed charmed with his friend; the conversation was just to his taste; and when Welford had supported him up to bed, he shook that person cordially by the hand, and hoped he should soon see him in very different circumstances. When the peer's door was closed on Welford, he stood motionless for some moments; he then with a soft step ascended to his own chamber. His wife slept soundly; beside the bed was the infant's cradle. As his eyes fell on the latter, the rigid irony, now habitual to his features, relaxed; he bent over the cradle long, and in deep silence. The mother's face, blended with the sire's, was stamped on the sleeping and cherub countenance before him; and as at length, rousing from his reverie, he kissed it gently, he murmured,—

"When I look on you I will believe that she once loved me.—Pah!" he said abruptly, and rising,— "this fatherly sentiment for a ——'s offering is exquisite in me!" So saying, without glancing towards his wife, who, disturbed by the loudness of his last words, stirred uneasily, he left the room, and descended into that where he had conversed with his guest. He shut the door with caution, and striding to and fro the humble apartment, gave vent to thoughts marshalled somewhat in the broken array in which they now appear to the reader.

"Ay, ay, she has been my ruin! and if I were one of your weak fools who make a gospel of the silliest and most mawkish follies of this social state, she would now be my disgrace; but, instead of my disgrace, I will make her my footstool to honour and wealth. And, then, to the devil with the footstool! Yes! two years I have borne what was enough to turn my whole blood into gall, inactivity, hopelessness

—a wasted heart and life in myself, contumely from the world, coldness, bickering, ingratitude, from the one for whom — oh, ass that I was! — I gave up the most cherished part of my nature — rather my nature itself! Two years I have borne this, and now will I have my revenge. — I will sell her — sell her! God! I will sell her like the commonest beast of a market! And this paltry piece of false coin shall buy me — my world! Other men's vengeance comes from hatred — a base, rash, unphilosophical sentiment! mine comes from scorn — the only wise state for the reason to rest in. Other men's vengeance ruins themselves — mine shall save me! Hah! — how my soul chuckles when I look at this pitiful pair, who think I see them not, and know that every movement they make is on a mesh of my web! Yet," and Welford paused slowly, — "yet I cannot but mock myself when I think of the arch gull that this boy's madness, love, — love, indeed! — the very word turns me sick with loathing, — made of me. Had that woman, silly, weak, automatal as she is, really loved me, had she been sensible of the unspeakable sacrifice I had made to her (Antony's was nothing to it — he lost a real world only; mine was the world of imagination), — had she but condescended to learn my nature, to subdue the woman's devil at her own, I could have lived on in this babbling hermitage for ever, and fancied myself happy and resigned, — I could have become a different being. I fancy I could have become what your moralists (quacks!) call 'good.' But this festering frivolity of heart, — this lust of fool's praise, — this peevishness of temper, — this sullenness in answer to the moody thought, which in me she neither fathomed nor forgave, — this vulgar, daily, hourly pining at the paltry pinches of the body's poverty, the domestic whine, the household complaint, —

when I had never met a thought for such painful traces of adoration; and all this while my career, my boundless love, and inspired spirit, and swollen heart, not thought of, the magnitude of my surrender to her not even comprehended; nay, her 'inconceivable'—my dear fourth, I suppose, or a hundredfold better,—compared, ay, infinitely compared with all which I possessed for her sake! As if it were not enough,—had I been a fool, or a shameless, soulless fiend,—the mere thought that I had linked my name to that of a tradesman—I beg pardon, a retired tradesman!—as if that knowledge,—a knowledge I would struggle my whole race, every day and night, to ever meet, seen me, rather than that should penetrate,—were not enough when she talks of 'compensating'—to make me gnaw the very floor-boards my bones! No, no, no! Never was there so bright a turn in my face as when this titled coquette, with his smooth voice and gaily fringed eyes, came forth! I will make her a tool to serve my escape from this cavern wherein she has plunged me. I will demand 'my lord's passion' (a butterfly's passion!) worth any price. I will then make my own terms, bid 'my lord' to comply, and get rid of my wife, my shame, and the obscurity of Mr. Welford, for ever. Bright, bright prospects! let me shut my eyes to none you! But softly,—my noble friend calls himself a man of the world, skilled in human nature, and a destroyer of its prejudices; true enough, in his own little way—thanks not to enlarged views but a vicious experience, as he is! The book of the world is a vast miscellany; he is perfectly well acquainted, doubtless, with those pages that treat of the follies,—particularly varied, I warrant, in the *Misconducts des Modes* tucked to the end of the index. But shall I, even with all the mastership which

my mind *must* exercise over his,—shall I be able utterly to free myself in this 'peer of the world's' mind from a degrading remembrance? Cuckold! cuckold! 'tis an ugly word; a convenient, willing cuckold, humph!—there is no grandeur, no philosophical varnish in the phrase. Let me see,—yes! I have a remedy for all that. I was married privately,—well! under disguised names,—well! it was a stolen marriage, far from her town,—well! witnesses unknown to her,—well! proofs easily secured to my possession,—excellent! the fool shall believe it a forged marriage, an ingenuous gallantry of mine; I will wash out the stain cuckold with the water of another word; I will make market of a mistress, not a wife. I will warn him not to acquaint *her* with this secret; let me consider for what reason,—oh! my son's legitimacy may be convenient to me hereafter. He will understand that reason, and I will have his 'honour' thereon. And by the way, I do care for that legitimacy, and will guard the proofs; I love my child,—ambitious men do love their children; I may become a lord myself, and may wish for a lord to succeed me; and that son is mine; thank Heaven! I am sure on that point,—the only child, too, that ever shall arise to me. Never, I swear, will I again put myself beyond my own power! All my nature, save one passion, I have hitherto mastered; that passion shall henceforth be my slave, my only thought be ambition, my only mistress be the world!"

As thus terminated the reverie of a man whom the social circumstances of the world were calculated, as if by system, to render amenable and badly wicked, Welford slowly ascended the stairs, and re-entered his chamber—his wife was still sleeping; her beauty was of the fair, and stolid, and harmonious order, which lovers and poets

would express by the word "angelic;" and as Welford looked upon her face, flushed and almost hallowed by slumber, a certain weakness and irresolution might have been discernible in the strong lines of his haughty features. At that moment, as if for ever to destroy the return of hope or virtue to either, her lips moved, they uttered one word,—it was the name of Welford's courtly guest.

About three weeks from that evening, Mrs. Welford eloped with the young nobleman, and on the morning following that event, the distracted husband with his child disappeared for ever from the town of * * * *. From that day no tidings whatsoever respecting him ever reached the titillated ears of his anxious neighbours; and doubt, curiosity, discussion, gradually settled into the belief that his despair had hurried him into suicide.

Although the unfortunate Mrs. Welford was in reality of a light and frivolous turn, and, above all, susceptible to personal vanity, she was not without ardent affections and keen sensibilities. Her marriage had been one of love, that is to say, on her part, the ordinary love of girls, who love not through actual and natural feeling so much as forced predisposition. Her choice had fallen on one superior to herself in birth, and far above all, in person and address, whom she had habitually met. Thus her vanity had assisted her affection, and something strange and eccentric in the temper and mind of Welford had, though at times it aroused her fear, greatly contributed to inflame her imagination. Then, too, though an uncourtly, he had been a passionate and a romantic lover. She was sensible that he gave up for her much that he had previously conceived necessary to his existence; and she stopped not to inquire how far this devotion was likely to last, or what conduct on her part might best perpetuate the feelings from which it sprung. She had eloped

with him. She had consented to a private marriage. She had passed one happy month, and then delusion vanished! Mrs. Welford was not a woman who could give to reality, or find in it, the charm equal to delusion. She was perfectly unable to comprehend the intricate and dangerous character of her husband. She had not the key to his virtues, nor the spell for his vices. Neither was the state to which poverty compelled them one well calculated for that tender meditation, heightened by absence, and cherished in indolence, which so often supplies one who loves with the secret to the nature of the one beloved. Though not equal to her husband in birth or early prospects, Mrs. Welford had been accustomed to certain comforts, often more felt by those who belong to the inferior classes than by those appertaining to the more elevated, who, in losing one luxury, will often cheerfully surrender all. A fine lady can submit to more hardships than her woman; and every gentleman who travels smiles at the privations which agonise his valet. Poverty and its grim comrades made way for a whole host of petty irritations and peevish complaints; and as no guest or visitor ever relieved the domestic discontent, or broke on the domestic bickering, they generally ended in that moody sullenness which so often finds love a grave in repentance. Nothing makes people tire of each other like a familiarity that admits of carelessness in quarrelling and coarseness in complaining. The biting sneer of Welford gave acrimony to the murmur of his wife; and when once each conceived the other the injurer, or him or herself the wronged, it was vain to hope that one would be more wary, or the other more indulgent. They both exacted too much, and the wife in especial conceded too little. Mrs. Welford was altogether and emphatically what a libertine calls "a

woman,"—such as a *frivolous education* makes a woman, generous in great things, poor in small, vain, sensible, full of the littleness of herself and her conduct, ready to plunge into an abyss with her lover, but equally ready to fret away all love with repugnance when the plunge had been made. Of all men, Welford could hear this the least. A woman of a larger heart, a more settled experience, and an intellect capable of appreciating his character, and sounding all his qualities, might have made him perhaps an useful and a great man; and, at least, one love for life. Amidst a harvest of evil feelings, the more strength of his nature rendered him especially exalted interior feeling and generous sentiment. One who relied on him was safe,—one who relied against him trusted only to the caprice of his scorn. Still, however, for two years, love, though weakling with each hour, fought on in either breast, and could scarcely be said to be entirely vanquished in the wife, even when she eloped with her lawless seducer. A French writer has said, pithily enough, "Compare for a moment the apathy of a husband with the attention, the gallantry, the adoration of a lover, and can you ask the result?" He was a French writer; but Mrs. Welford had in her temper much of the Frenchwoman. A self-loving patient, young, handsome, well versed in the arts of intrigue, contrasted with a gloomy husband whom she had never comprehended, long feared, and had lately despised if she disliked,—ah! a much weaker contrast had made many a much better woman feed for the lawyers! Mrs. Welford eloped; but she felt a revived tenderness for her husband on the very morning that she did so. She married away with her life letters of love as common her own, which when they first married she had in an hour of fondness collected together—then an instinctive heart; and never did her new

lover receive from her beautiful lips half so passionate a kiss as she left on the cheek of her infant. For some months she enjoyed with her paramour all for which she had staked in her home. The one for whom she had forsaken her legitimate ties was a person so habitually cheerful, courteous, and what is ordinarily termed good natured (though he had in him as much of the essence of selfishness as any nobleman can decently have), that he continued gallant to her without an effort long after he had begun to think it possible to tire even of so lovely a face. Yet there were moments when the fickle wife recalled her husband with regret; and, contrasting him with her seducer, did not find all the colourings of the contrast flattering to the latter. There is something in a powerful and marked character which women, and all weak natures, feel themselves constrained to respect; and Welford's character thus stood in bold, and therefore advantageous though gloomy, relief when opposed to the levities and follies of this gaily woman's present adorer. However this be, the die was cast; and it would have been policy for the lady to have made the best of her present game. But she who had murmured as a wife was not complaisant as a mistress. Reprehensions made an interlude to caresses, which the noble lover by no means admired. He was not a man to retort, he was too indolent; but neither was he one to forbear. "My charming friend," said he one day, after a scene, "you weary of me,—nothing more natural! Why torment each other? You say I have ruined you; my sweet friend, let me make you reparation.—become independent, I will settle an annuity upon you; fly me—seek happiness elsewhere, and leave your unfortunate, your despairing lover to his fate."

"Do you taunt me, my lord!" cried the angry fair, "or do you

believe that money can replace the rights of which you have robbed me! Can you make me again a wife—a happy, a respected wife? Do this, my lord, and you atone to me!”

The nobleman smiled, and shrugged his shoulders. The lady yet more angrily repeated her question. The lover answered by an *inuendo*, which at once astonished and doubly enraged her. She eagerly demanded explanation; and his lordship, who had gone farther than he intended, left the room. But his words had sunk deep into the breast of this unhappy woman, and she resolved to procure an elucidation. Agreeably to the policy which stripped the fabled traveller of his cloak, she laid aside the storm, and preferred the sunshine: she watched a moment of tenderness, turned the opportunity to advantage, and, by little and little, she possessed herself of a secret which sickened her with shame, disgust, and dismay. Sold! bartered! the object of a contemptuous huxtering to the purchaser and the seller; sold, too, with a lie that debased her at once into an object for whom even pity was mixed with scorn. Robbed already of the name and honour of a wife, and transferred as a harlot, from the wearied arms of one leman to the capricious caresses of another. Such was the image that rose before her; and, while it roused at one moment all her fiercer passions into madness, humbled, with the next, her vanity into the dust. She, who knew the ruling passion of Welford, saw, at a glance, the object of scorn and derision which she had become to him. While she imagined herself the betrayer, she had been the betrayed; she saw vividly before her (and shuddered as she saw) her husband's icy smile—his serpent eye—his features steeped in sarcasm, and all his mocking soul stamped upon the countenance, whose lightest derision was so galling. She turned from this picture,

and saw the courtly face of the purchaser—his subdued smile at her reproaches—his latent sneer at her claims to a station which he had been taught, by the arch plotter, to believe she had never possessed. She saw his early weariness of her attractions, expressed with respect indeed—an insulting respect,—but felt without a scruple of remorse. She saw in either—as around—only a reciprocation of contempt. She was in a web of profound abasement. Even that haughty grief of conscience for ering committed to another, which if it stings, humbles not, was swallowed up in a far more agonising sensation, to one so vain as the adulteress—the burning sense of shame at having herself while sinning, been the duped and deceived. Her very soul was appalled with her humiliation. The curse of Welford's vengeance was on her—and it was wrought to the last! Whatever kindly sentiment she might have experienced towards her protector, was swallowed up at once by this discovery. She could not endure the thought of meeting the eye of one who had been the gainer by this ignominious barter, the foibles and weaknesses of the lover assumed a despicable as well as hateful dye. And in feeling herself degraded, she loathed him. The day after she had made the discovery we have referred to, Mrs. Welford left the house of her protector, none knew whither. For two years from that date, all trace of her history was lost. At the end of that time, what was Welford?—A man rapidly rising in the world, distinguished at the bar, where his first brief had lifted him into notice, commencing a flattering career in the senate, holding lucrative and honourable offices, esteemed for the austere rectitude of his moral character, gathering the golden opinions of all men, as he strode onward to public reputation. He had re-assumed his hereditary name: his early history

one unknown, and no one in the obscure and distant town of * * * * had ever guessed that the humble Wicket was the William Brandon whose name was noted in so many journals, and whose name was acknowledged by all. That asperity, roughness, and gloom which had rested there at * * * * and which, being ascribed to him, he refused not to confess in relation ascribed to his father and whose hopes were now generously varied over by an hereditary will calculated to aid his ambition. So naturally would this singular man be himself to others, that for among the great next him as a companion, not left him without the chance to become his friend. Through his humble soul, that is the noblest our reader's "worthy family name" through that name, he had acquired his first fortune, that a certain patronage from government, and his seat in parliament. If he had persevered at the bar, rather than given himself entirely to state business, it was only because his talents were eminently more calculated to advance him in the former path to honour, than in the latter. So devoted was he himself to public life, that he had only permitted himself to cherish one private source of enjoyment, — his son. As no one, not even his brother, knew he had been treated — during the two years of his disguised name, he had been exposed almost to the appearance of this man, made that only proof of denial, which whispered against the right conclusion of his father's; but he himself, seeing his son thus for growing a legitimate heir, gave out that it was the opposite child of a dear friend whom he had never altered; and the partial denunciations not only of life, but manner, which he assumed, gained a pretty large belief to the statement. This son Brandon believed. As we have represented himself to say — ambitious men are commonly fond of

their children, beyond the fondness of other sires. The perpetual reference which the ambitious make to posterity, is perhaps the main reason. But Brandon was also fond of children generally; philanthropism was a marked trait in his character, and would seem to belie the hardness and artifice belonging to that character, were not the same love so frequently noticeable in the harsh and the artful. It seems as if a half-conscious but pleasing feeling, that *they* too were once gentle and innocent, makes them delight in reviving any sympathy with their early state.

Often after the applause and labour of the day, Brandon would repair to his son's chamber, and watch his slumber for hours; often before his morning toil commenced, he would nurse the infant in his arms with all a woman's natural tenderness and gushing joy. And often, as a graver and more characteristic sentiment stole over him, he would mentally say, — "You shall build up our broken name on a better foundation than your sire. I began too late in life, and I labour up a painful and stony road; but I shall make the journey to Fame smooth and accessible for you. Never, too, while you aspire to honour, shall you shed your heart to tranquillity. For you, my child, shall be the joys of home and love, and a mind that does not sicken at the past, and strain, through mere fretfulness, towards a solitary and barren destination for the future. Not only what your father gives you shall you enjoy, but what has caused him, his vigilance shall lead you to share!"

It was thus not only that his softer feelings, but all the better and nobler ones, which, even in the worst and hardest souls, find some rest, turned towards his child; and that the bold and vicious man promised to become the affectionate and perhaps the wise parent.

One night, Brandon was returning home, on foot, from a ministerial dinner. The night was frosty and clear, the hour was late, and his way lay through the longest and best-lighted streets of the metropolis. He was, as usual, buried in thought, when he was suddenly aroused from his reverie by a light touch laid on his arm. He turned, and saw one of the unhappy persons who haunt the midnight streets of cities, standing right before his path. The gaze of each fell upon the other; and it was thus, for the first time since they laid their heads on the same pillow, that the husband met the wife. The skies were intensely clear, and the lamplight was bright and calm upon the faces of both. There was no doubt in the mind of either. Suddenly, and with a startled and ghastly consciousness, they recognised each other. The wife staggered, and clung to a post for support: Brandon's look was calm and unmoved. The hour that his bitter and malignant spirit had yearned for was come: his nerves expanded in a voluptuous calmness, as if to give him a deliberate enjoyment of his hope fulfilled. Whatever the words that, in that unwitnessed and almost awful interview, passed between them, we may be sure that Brandon spared not one atom of his power. The lost and abandoned wife returned home, and all her nature, embruted as it had become by guilt and vile habits, hardened into revenge,—that preternatural feeling which may be termed the hope of despair.

Three nights from that meeting, Brandon's house was broken into. Like the houses of many legal men, it lay in a dangerous and thinly populated outskirt of the town, and was easily accessible to robbery. He was awakened by a noise: he started, and found himself in the grasp of two men. At the foot of the bed stood a

female, raising a light, and her face, haggard with searing passions, and ghastly with the leprous whiteness of disease and approaching death, glared full upon him.

"It is now my turn," said the female, with a grin of scorn which Brandon himself might have envied; "you have cursed me, and I return the curse! You have told me that my child shall never name me but to blush. Fool! I triumph over you: you he shall never know to his dying day! You have told me, that to my child and my child's child (a long transmission of execration), my name—the name of the wife you basely sold to ruin and to hell, should be left as a legacy of odium and shame! Man, you shall teach that child no farther lesson whatever: you shall know not whether he live or die, or have children to carry on your boasted race; or whether, if he have, those children be not outcasts of the earth—the accursed of man and God—the fit offspring of the thing you have made me. Wretch! I hurl back on you the denunciation with which, when we met three nights since, you would have crushed the victim of your own perfidy. You shall tread the path of your ambition childless, and objectless, and hopeless. Disease shall set her stamp upon your frame. The worm shall batten upon your heart. You shall have honours and enjoy them not: you shall gain your ambition, and despair: you shall pine for your son, and find him not; or, if you find him, you shall curse the hour in which he was born. Mark me, man—I am dying while I speak—I know that I am a prophet in my curse. From this hour I am avenged, and you are my scorn!"

As the hardest nature sink appalled before the stony eye of the maniac, so, in the dead of the night, pinioned by ruffians, the wild and solemn voice sharpened by passion and partial

realised of the ghastly figure before him, meeting through his veins, even the loathing and dying character of William Brandon quailed? He uttered not a word. He was found the next morning, bound by strong cords to his bed. He spoke not when he was released, but went in silence to his child's chamber — the child was gone! Several articles of property were also stolen; the desperate tools the mother had employed worked not perhaps after their own reward.

We need scarcely add, that Brandon set every engine and channel of justice

in motion for the discovery of his son. All the essential shrewdness and keenness of his own character, aided by his professional experience, he employed for years in the same pursuit. Every research was wholly in vain: not the remotest vestige towards discovery could be traced, until were found (we have recorded when) some of the articles that had been stolen. Fate treasured in her gloomy womb, altogether undescried by man, the hour and the scene in which the most ardent wish of William Brandon was to be realised.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

“O Fortuna, viris invita fortibus
Quam non equa bonis premia divitis.”

SENECA.

• Add as a hare, whom bounds and burns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew.”

• Here, to the homeless child of want,
My door is open still.”

GOLDSMITH.

SLOWLY for Lucy waned the weeks of a winter, which, to her, was the most dreary portion of life she had ever passed. It became the time for the judge to attend one of those periodical vicissitudes so fraught with dread and dismay to the miserable inmates of the dark abodes which the complex laws of this country so boundlessly supply—those times of great hilarity and eating to the legal gentry.

“Who feed on crimes and fatten on distress,
And wring vile mirth from suffering’s last excess.”

Ah! excellent order of the world, which it is so wicked to disturb! How miraculously beautiful must be that system which wrings wine out of the scorching tears of guilt, and from

the suffocating suspense, the agonised fear, the compelled and self-mocking bravery, the awful sentence, the despairing death pang of one man, fulfils the sparkling expectation of five, the jovial meeting, and the merry-making holiday to another! “Of Law, nothing less can be said, than that her seat is the bosom of God.” To be sure not! Richard Hooker, you are perfectly right. The divinity of a session, and the inspiration of the Old Bailey, are undeniable!

The case of Sir William Brandon had effectually kept from Lucy’s ear the knowledge of her lover’s ignominious situation. Indeed, in her delicate health, even the hard eye of Brandon, and the thoughtless glance

of Mauleverer, perceived the danger of such a discovery. The earl now waiting the main attack on Lucy, till the curtain had for ever dropped on Clifford, proceeded with great caution and delicacy in his suit to his purposed bride. He waited with the more patience, inasmuch as he had drawn in advance on his friend Sir William for some portion of the heiress's fortune; and he readily allowed that he could not, in the meanwhile, have a better advocate than he found in Brandon. So persuasive, indeed, and so subtle was the eloquence of this able sophist, that often, in his artful conversations with his niece, he left even on the unvisited, and strong though simple, mind of Lucy an uneasy and restless impression, which time might have ripened into an inclination towards the worldly advantages of the marriage at her command. Brandon was no bungling mediator or violent persecutor. He seemed to acquiesce in her rejection of Mauleverer. He scarcely recurred to the event. He rarely praised the earl himself, save for the obvious qualities of liveliness and good-nature. But he spoke, with all the vivid colours he could infuse at will into his words, of the pleasures and the duties of rank and wealth. Well could he appeal alike to all the prejudices and all the foibles of the human breast, and govern virtue through its weaknesses. Lucy had been brought up, like the daughters of most country gentlemen of ancient family, in an undue and idle consciousness of superior birth; and he was far from inaccessible to the warmth and even feeling (for *here* Brandon was sincere) with which her uncle spoke of the duty of raising a gallant name sunk into disrepute, and sacrificing our own inclination, for the redecorating the mouldered splendour of those who have gone before us. If the confusion of idea

occasioned by a vague pomposity of phrase, or the infant inculcation of a sentiment that is mistaken for a virtue, so often makes fools of the wise on the subject of ancestry; if it clouded even the sarcastic and keen sense of Brandon himself, we may forgive its influence over a girl so little versed in the arts of sound reasoning as poor Lucy, who, it may be said, had never learnt to think until she had learnt to love. However, the impression made by Brandon, in his happiest moments of persuasion, was as yet only transient; it vanished before the first thought of Clifford, and never suggested to her even a doubt as to the suit of Mauleverer.

When the day arrived for Sir William Brandon to set out on the circuit, he called Barlow, and enjoined that acute and intelligent servant the strictest caution with respect to Lucy. He bade him deny her to every one, of whatever rank, and carefully to look into every newspaper that was brought to her, as well as to withhold every letter, save such as were addressed to her in the judge's own hand-writing. Lucy's maid Brandon had already won over to silence; and the uncle now pleased himself with thinking that he had put an effectual guard to every chance of discovery. The identity of Lovett with Clifford had not yet even been rumoured, and Mauleverer had rightly judged of Clifford, when he believed the prisoner would himself take every precaution against the detection of that fact. Clifford answered the earl's note and promise, in a letter couched in so affecting yet so manly a tone of gratitude, that even Brandon was touched when he read it. And since his confinement and partial recovery of health, the prisoner had kept himself closely secluded, and refused all visitors. Encouraged by this reflection, and the belief in the safety of his precautions, Brandon took leave

of Lucy. "Farewell!" said he, as he embraced her affectionately. "Be sure that you write to me, and forgive me if I do not answer you punctually. Take care of yourself, my sweet niece, and let me see a fresher colour on that pale cheek when I return!"

"Take care of yourself rather, my dear, dear uncle," said Lucy, clinging to him and weeping, as of late her weakened nerves caused her to do at the least agitation. "Why may I not go with you?" You have seemed to me sicker than usual the last three or four days, and you complained yesterday. Do let me go with you; I will be no trouble, none at all, but I am sure you require a nurse."

"You want to frighten me, my pretty Lucy," said Brandon, shaking his head with a smile. "I am well, very well. I felt a strange rush of blood towards the head yesterday, it is true; but I feel today stronger and lighter than I have done for years. Once more, God bless you, my child!"

And Brandon tore himself away, and commenced his journey.

The wandering and dramatic course of our story now conducts us to an obscure lane in the metropolis leading to the Thames, and makes us spectators of an affecting farewell between two persons, whom the injustice of fate, and the persecutions of men, were about perhaps for ever to divide.

"Adieu, my friend!" said Augustus Tomlinson, as he stood looking full on that segment of the face of Edward Pepper which was left unenclosed by a huge hat and a red belcher handkerchief. Tomlinson himself was attired in the full costume of a *figuero* clergyman. "Adieu, my friend, since you will remain in England—adieu! I am, I exult to say, no less sincere a patriot than you. Heaven be my witness, how long I looked repugnantly on poor Lancelot's proposal to quit my beloved country. But all hope of life here is now over.

and really, during the last ten days, I have been so hunted from corner to corner, so plagued with polite invitations, similar to those given by a farmer's wife to her ducks, 'Dilly, dilly, come and be killed!' that my patriotism has been prodigiously cooled, and I no longer recoil from thoughts of self banishment. 'The earth,' my dear Ned, as a Greek sage has very well observed,—'the earth is the same every where!' and if I am asked for my home, I can point, like Anaxagoras, to heaven!"

"Pon my soul, you affect me!" said Ned, speaking thick, either from grief or the pressure of the belcher handkerchief on his mouth: "it is quite beautiful to hear you talk!"

"Bear up, my dear friend," continued Tomlinson; "bear up against your present afflictions. What, to a man who fortifies himself by reason and by reflection on the shortness of life, are the little calamities of the body! What is imprisonment, or persecution, or cold, or hunger!—By the by, you did not forget to put the sandwiches into my coat-pocket!"

"Hush!" whispered Ned, and he moved on involuntarily; "I see a man at the other end of the street."

"Let us quicken our pace," said Tomlinson, and the pair proceeded towards the river.

"And now," began Ned, who thought he might as well say something about himself, for hitherto Augustus, in the ardour of his friendship, had been only discussing his own plans,— "and now,—that is to say, when I leave you,—I shall hasten to dive for shelter, until the storm blows over. I don't much like living in a cellar and wearing a smock frock,—but those consolments have something interesting in them, after all! The safest and snugest place I know of is the *Pigeon Box* about Thames Court; so I think of hiring an apartment under ground, and taking my meals

at poor Lovett's old quarters, the Mug,—the police will never dream of looking in these vulgar haunts for a man of my fashion."

"You cannot then tear yourself from England?" said Tomlinson.

"No, hang it! the fellows are so cursed unmanly on the other side of the water. I hate their wine and their *parley voo*. Besides, there is no fun there."

Tomlinson, who was absorbed in his own thoughts, made no comment on his friend's excellent reasons against travel, and the pair now approached the brink of the river. A boat was in waiting to receive and conduct to the vessel in which he had taken his place for Calais, the illustrious emigrant. But as Tomlinson's eye fell suddenly on the rude boatman and the little boat which were to bear him away from his native land; as he glanced too, across the blue waters, which a brisk wind wildly agitated, and thought how much rougher it would be at sea, where "his soul" invariably "sickened at the heaving wave," a whole tide of deep and sorrowful emotions rushed upon him.

He turned away:—the spot on which he stood was a piece of ground to be let (as a board proclaimed) upon a building lease; below, descended the steps which were to conduct him to the boat; around, the desolate space allowed him to see in far and broad extent the spires and domes, and chimneys of the great city whose inhabitants he might never plunder more. As he looked and looked, the tears started to his eyes, and with a gust of enthusiasm little consonant with his temperate and philosophical character, he lifted his right hand from his black breeches pocket, and burst into the following farewell to the metropolis of his native shores:—

"Farewell, my beloved London,

farewell! Where shall I ever find a city like you? Never, till now, did I feel how inexpressibly dear you were to me. You have been my father, and my brother, and my mistress, and my tailor, and my shoemaker, and my hatter, and my cook, and my wine-merchant! You and I never misunderstood each other. I did not grumble when I saw what fine houses and good strong boxes you gave to other men. No! I rejoiced at their prosperity. I delighted to see a rich man—my only disappointment was in stumbling on a poor one. You gave riches to my neighbours; but, O generous London, you gave those neighbours to me! Magnificent streets, all Christian virtues abide within you! Charity is as common as smoke! Where, in what corner of the habitable world, shall I find human beings with so many superfluities? Where shall I so easily decoy, from benevolent credulity, those superfluities to myself! Heaven only knows, my dear, dear, darling London, what I lose in you! O public charities!—O public institutions!—O banks that belie mathematical axioms and make lots out of nothing!—O ancient constitution always to be questioned!—O modern improvements that never answer!—O speculations!—O companies!—O usury laws which guard against usurers, by making as many as possible!—O churches in which no one profits, save the parson, and the old women that let pews of an evening!—O superb theatres, too small for parks, too enormous for houses, which exclude comedy and comfort, and have a monopoly for performing nonsense gigantically!—O houses of plaster built in a day!—O palaces four yards high, with a dome in the middle, meant to be invisible!*—O

* We must not suppose this apostrophe to be an anachronism! Tomlinson, of course, refers to some palace of *his* day; one of the boxes—Christmas boxes—given to the King

shops worth thousands, and O shops-keepers not worth a shilling!—O system of traffic by which beggars are rogues, and rogues are beggars!—O encouragement for debt, which lets the wretch be stolen, and then locks up the house!—O sharpeners, babbles, scatters, bores, taverns, beaches, clubs, houses private and public!—O London, in a word, remove my last ailment! Long may you flourish in peace and phantasmagoria! May your rivers be waxy, and your fogs be thick! May you alter only two things—your delectable tracks of transportation and hanging!—Those are your sins, faults, but for those I would never desert you—Adieu!”

Here Tomlinson asserted his head, and then hastily shaking the hand of Long Ned with a tremulous and warty grasp, he hurried down the stairs and entered the boat. Ned remained motionless for some moments, following him with his eyes as he sat at the end of the boat, waving a white pocket-handkerchief. At length a line of barges snatched him from the sight of the lingerer, and Ned slowly bending away, muttered—“Yes, I have always heard that Dame Lobb’s wife was the safest asylum for sinners like mine. I will go forthwith in search of a lodging, and to-morrow I will make my breakfast at the May!”

Be it our pleasing task, dear reader, to *follow* the good robber, and return, at the hour of sunrise on the day following Tomlinson’s departure, to the scene at which our story commenced. We are now once more at the house of Mrs. Margery Lobb.

As the economical nation of shopkeepers. We suppose it is either pulled down or taken down long ago; it is difficult to tell. It is this way, except by comparison. Nothing is so economical as good houses built for the people. Your kings play the dance with their playthings!

The room which served so many purposes was still the same as when Paul turned it into the arena of his mischievous pranks. The dresser, with its shelves of mingled doll and powder, occupied its ancient and important station. Only it might be noticed that the powder was more dull than of yore, and that sundry cracks made their erratic wanderings over the yellow surface of the doll. The eye of the mistress had become less keen than heretofore, and the care of the handmaid had, of necessity, relaxed. The tall clock still ticked in monotonous warning; the blanket-skreen, happily innocent of soap since we last described it, many-storied, and poly-bellied, still unfolded its ample leaves “rich with the spoils of time.” The spit and the mackerel yet hung from the wall in amiable proximity. And the long smooth form, “with many a holy text *thereon be-strewn*,” still afforded rest to the weary traveller, and an object to the vacant stare of Mrs. Margery Lobb, as she lolled in her opposite seat and forgot the world. But poor Peggy Lobb! *there* was the alteration! The soul of the woman was gone! The spirit had evaporated from the human bottle! She sat with open mouth and glassy eye in her chair, siddling herself to and fro, with the low, peevish sound of fretful age and bodily pain; sometimes this querulous murmur sharpened into a shrill but unmeaning wail. “There now, you gillions larri! you has taken the swipes without chalking; you wants to cheat the poor widow; but I sees you, I does! Providence protects the aged and the innocent—oh, oh, those twinges will be the death o’ me! Whose Martha! You jade, you! you wipersnoses lasses, bring the tape here, doesn’t you see how I suffers! Has you no boards, to let a poor Christian creeter parish for want o’ help! That’s the way with ‘em, that’s

the way! No one cares for I now—no one has respect for the gray hairs of the old!" And then the voice dwindled into the whimpering "tenor of its way." Martha, a strapping wench with red hair streaming over her "hills of snow," was not, however, inattentive to the wants of her mistress. "Who knows," said she to a man who sat by the hearth, drinking tea out of a blue mug, and toasting with great care two or three huge rounds of bread, for his own private and especial nutriment—"who knows," said she, "what we may come to ourselves?" And, so saying, she placed a glowing tumbler by her mistress's elbow. But in the sunken prostration of her intellect, the old woman was insensible even to her consolation: she sipped and drank, it is true; but as if the stream warmed not the benumbed region through which it passed, she continued muttering in a crazed and groaning key, "Is this your gratitude, you serpent! why does not you bring the tape, I tells you? Am I of a age to drink water like a oae, you nasty thing! Oh, to think as ever I should live to be deserted!"

Inattentive to these murmurs, which she felt unreasonable, the bouncing Martha now quitted the room, to repair to her "upper household" avocations. The man at the hearth was the only companion left to the widow. Gazing at her for a moment, as she sat whining, with a rude compassion in his eye, and slowly munching his toast which he had now buttered, and placed in a delf plate on the hob, this person thus soothingly began:—

"Ah, Dame Lobkins, if so be as ow little Paul vas a vith you, it would be a gallows comfort to you in your latter hend!"

The name of Paul made the good woman incline her head towards the speaker; a ray of consciousness shot through her bedulled brain.

"Little Paul, eh, sirs! where is Paul! Paul, I say, my ben-cull. Alack! he's gone—left his poor old nurse to die like a cat in a cellar. Oh, Dummie, never live to be old, man! They leaves us to ourself, and then takes away all the lush with 'em! I has not a drop o' comfort in the varsal world!"

Dummie, who at this moment had his own reasons for soothing the dame, and was anxious to make the most of the opportunity of a conversation as unwitnessed as the present, replied tenderly; and with a cunning likely to promote his end, reproached Paul bitterly for never having informed the dame of his whereabouts and his proceedings. "But come, dame," he wound up, "come, I guess as how he is better nor all that, and that you need not beat your hold brains to think where he lies, or vot he's a doing. Blow me tight, mother Lob, —I ax pardon, Mrs. Mangery, I should say,—if I could not give five bob, ay, and five to the tail o' that, to know what the poor lad is about; I takes a mortal hinterest in that 'ere chap!"

"Oh! oh!" groaned the old woman, on whose palsied sense the astute inquiries of Dummie Dunnaker fell harmless; "my poor sinful carcass! what a way it be in!"

Artfully again did Dummie Dunnaker, nothing defeated, renew his attack; but fortune does not always favour the wise, and it failed Dummie now, for a twofold reason: first, because it was not possible for the dame to comprehend him; secondly, because even if it had been, she had nothing to reveal. Some of Clifford's pecuniary gifts had been conveyed anonymously, all without direction or date; and, for the most part they had been appropriated by the sage Martha, into whose hands they fell, to her own private uses. Nor did the dame require Clifford's grateful charity; for she was a woman tolerably well off in this

world, considering how near she was warring to another. Longer, however, might Dummie have tried his unassuming way, had not the door of the inn creaked on its hinges, and the bulky form of a tall man in a smock-trunk, but with a remarkably fine head of hair, darkened the threshold. He honoured the dame, who cast on him a black lustre eye, with a snaky, yet unobtrusive nod, seized a bottle of spirits and a tumbler, lighted a candle, drew a small German pipe and a tobacco-box from his pouch, placed these several luxuries on a small table, whisked it to a far corner of the room, and throwing himself into one chair, and his legs into another, he enjoyed the result of his pains in a moody and expectant silence. Long and earnestly did the smock Dummie gaze on the face of the gentleman before him. It had been some years since he had last beheld it; but it was one which did not easily escape the memory; and although its proprietor was a man who had risen in the world, and gained the height of his profession in station far beyond the dismal sphere of Dummie Drunkard, and the humble performer was, therefore, anticipated to encounter him in those lower regions, yet Dummie's recollection carried him back to a day when they had gone down together without respect of persons, and been right jolly partners in the practical game of lagging by night. While, however, Dummie Drunkard was was a little loath to be day-differentiated as to the propriety of sharing an acquaintanceship, a dirty boy, with a face which betokened the frost, as Dummie himself said, like a plum dying of the earliest fever, entered the room, with a newspaper in his dexter paw. "Great news—great news!" cried the scoundrel, hurrying his vocal organs vigorously in the street, "all about the famous Captain Lovett, as large as life!"

"Old your blarney, you blatter gowl," said Dummie, rebukingly, and seizing the journal.

"Master says as how he must have it to send to Clapham, and can't spare it for more than a our!" said the boy, as he withdrew.

"I remember the day," said Dummie, with the zeal of a clansman, "when the Mug took a paper all to itself instead of 'ring it by the job like I!"

Thereon he opened the paper with a flip, and gave himself up to the lecture. But the tall stranger, half rising with a start, exclaimed, "Can't you have the manners to be communicative!—do you think nobody cares about Captain Lovett but yourself?"

On this, Dummie turned round on his chair, and, with a "blow me tight, you're welcome, I'm sure," began as follows:—(we copy the paper, not the diction of the reader.)

"The trial of the notorious Lovett commences this day. Great exertions have been made by people of all classes to procure seats in the Town Hall, which will be full to a degree never before known in this peaceful province. No less than seven indictments are said to await the prisoner; it has been agreed that the robbery of Lord Malvernshall should be the first to come on. The principal witness in this case against the prisoner is understood to be the king's evidence, Mac Grawler. No news, as yet, have been circulated concerning the suspected accomplices, Augustus Tomlinson and Edward Pepper. It is believed that the former has left the country, and that the latter is lurking among the low refugees of guilt with which the heart of the metropolis abounds. Report speaks highly of the person and manners of Lovett. He is also supposed to be a man of some talent, and was formerly engaged in an obscure periodical, edited by Mac Grawler, and termed the

Altemum, or Aainæum. Nevertheless, we apprehend that his origin is remarkably low, and suitable to the nature of his pursuits. The prisoner will be most fortunate in a judge. Never did any one holding the same high office as Sir William Brandon earn an equal reputation in so short a time. The Whigs are accustomed to sneer at us, when we insist on the *private* virtues of our public men. Let them look to Sir William Brandon, and confess that the austere morals may be linked with the soundest knowledge and the most brilliant genius. The opening address of the learned judge to the jury at . . . is perhaps the most impressive and solemn piece of eloquence in the English language!" A cause for this eulogium might haply be found in another part of the paper, in which it was said, "Among the higher circles, we understand, the rumour has gone forth, that Sir William Brandon is to be recalled to his old parliamentary career in a more elevated scene. So highly are this gentleman's talents respected by his Majesty and the ministers, that they are, it is reported, anxious to secure his assistance in the House of Lords!"

When Dummie had spelt his "toil-some march" through the first of the above extracts, he turned round to the tall stranger, and eyeing him with a sort of winking significance, said,—

So Mac Grawler peaches! blows the gaff on his pals, eh! Vel now, I always suspected that 'ere son of a gun! Do you know, he used to be at the Mug many's a day, a teaching our little Paul, and says I to Piggy Lobb, says I, 'Blow me tight, but that cove is a queer one! and if he does not come to be scragged,' says I, 'it vill only be because he'll turn a rusty, and scrag one of his pals!' So you sees—(here Dummie looked round, and his voice sank into a

whisper)—so you sees, *Mecster Pepper*, I vas no fool there!"

Long Ned dropped his pipe, and said sourly, and with a suspicious frown, "What! you know me!"

"To be sure and sartain I does," answered little Dummie, walking to the table where the robber sat. "Does not you know I?"

Ned regarded the interrogator with a sullen glance, which gradually brightened into knowledge. "Ah!" said he, with the air of a Brummel, "Mr. Bummie, or Dummie, I think, oh! Shake a paw—I'm glad to see you.—Recollect the last time I saw you, you rather affronted me. Never mind. I dare say you did not mean it." Encouraged by this affable reception from the highwayman, though a little embarrassed by Ned's allusion to former conduct on his part, which he felt was just, Dummie grinned, pushed a stool near Ned, sat himself down, and carefully avoiding any immediate answer to Ned's complaint, he rejoined:—

"Do you know, Mecester Pepper, you struck I all of a heap. I could not have sposed as how you'd condescend nowadays to come to the Mug, where I never seed you but once afore. Lord love ye, they says as 'ow you go to all the fine places in ruffles with a pair of silver pops in your vaistcoat pocket! Vy, the boys hereabouts say that you and Mecester Tomlinson, and this 'ere poor devil in quod, vere the finest gemmen in town; and, Lord, for to think of your civility to a pitiful rag-merchant, like I!"

"Ah!" said Ned, gravely, "there are sad principles afloat now. They want to do away with all distinctions in rank,—to make a duke no better than his valet, and a gentleman highwayman class with a filcher of fagles.* But, dammee, if I don't think misfortune levels us all quite enough

* Pickpocket.

and misfortune brings me here, little Dummie."

"Ah! you wants to keep out of the way of the lockins!"

"Right. Some poor Lovett was led by the heels, which I must say was the fault of his own damned gentlemanly behaviour to me and Augustus; you've heard of Gus, you say, the knave of us seems quite broken. One's own friends look inclined to pay one false; and really, the queer fellows never so sharply upon us, that I thought it safe to duck for a time. So I have taken a lodging in a collar, and I intend for the next three months to board at the Mug. I have heard that I may be sure of lying snug here:—Dummie, your health! Give us the larry!"

"I say, Meester Pepper," said Dummie, clearing his throat, when he had crossed the request, "can you tell I, if so be you as most in your travels see little Paul? Poor chap! You knows as we and vy he vas sent to gaol by Justice Barnflat. Yel, ven he got out, he went to the devil, or somethink like it, and ve have not eard a word of him since. You 'members the lad—a nation fine cull, tall and straight as a barrow!"

"What, you fool," said Ned, "don't you know?"—then, checking himself suddenly—"ah! by the by, that righteous oath—I was not to tell; though now it's past caring for, I fear! It is no use looking after the owl when the better's burnt."

"How me," cried Dunnaker, with unaffected vehemence, "I seen as how you know vat's come of he! Mary's the good turn I'll do you, if you will but tell I."

"Why, does he owe you a dozen lads? Or what, Dummie?" said Ned.

"Not he—not he," cried Dummie.

"What then, you want to do him a mischief of some sort?"

"Do little Paul a mischief!" ejaculated Dummie; "vy I've known the cull ever since he was *that* high! No, but I wants to do him a great service, Meester Pepper, and myself too,—and you to boot, for aught that I know, Meester Pepper."

"Humph!" said Ned; "humph! what do you mean? I do, it is true, know where Paul is; but you must tell me first why you wish to know, otherwise you may ask your grandfather for me."

A long, sharp, wistful survey did Mr. Dummie Dunnaker cast around him before he rejoined. All seemed safe and convenient for confidential communication. The supine features of Mrs. Lobkins were hushed in a drowsy stupor; even the grey cat that lay by the fire was curled in the embrace of Morpheus. Nevertheless, it was in a close whisper that Dummie spoke.

"I darsn be bound, Meester Pepper, that you 'members vel ven Harry Cook, the great highvayman,—poor fellow! he's gone where ve must all go,—brought you, then quite a *quosome*,^{*} for the first time, to the little back parlour at the Cook and Hen, Devonex Court."

Ned nodded assent.

"And you 'members as how I met Harry and you there, and I vas all afeard at you—come vy! I had never seen you afore, and ve vas a going to crack a *small's crab*. And Harry spoke up for you, and said as on, though you had just gone on the

* The reader has probably observed the use made by Dummie and Mrs. Lobkins of Irish phraseology or pronunciation. This is a remarkable trait in the dialect of the honest sailors in London, being, we suppose, to their constant association with immigrants from the West Indies of the coast. Perhaps it is a mistaken affection among the gentry of St. James's, just as we shake out mother tongue with French at Mayfair.

† Break into a gentleman's house.

town, you was already prime up to gammon:—you 'members, eh?"

"Ay, I remember all," said Ned; "it was the first and only house I ever had a hand in breaking into. Harry was a fellow of low habits, so I dropped his acquaintance, and took solely to the road, or a chance ingenuity now and then. I have no idea of a gentleman turning *cracksmen*."

"Vell, so you vent with us, and we slipped you through a pane in the kitchen window. You vas the least of us, big as you be now; and you vent round, and opened the door for us; and ven you had opened the door, you saw a voman had joined us, and you were a funk'd then, and stayed without the *crib*, to keep vatch while ve vent in."

"Well, well," cried Ned, "what the devil has all this rigmarole got to do with Paul?"

"Now don't be glimflashey, but but let me go on smack right about. Vell, ven ve came out, you minds as ow the voman had a bundle in her arms, and you spake to her; and she answered you roughly, and left us all, and vent straight home; and ve vent and *finced the swart* that very night, and afterwards *napped the regulars*.[‡] And sure you made us laugh artily, Meester Pepper, when you said, says you, 'That 'ere voman is a rum blowen!' So she vas, Meester Pepper!"

"O spare me," said Ned, affectedly, "and make haste; you keep me all in the dark. By the way, I remember that you joked me about the bundle; and when I asked what the woman had wrapped in it, you swore it was a child. Rather more likely that the girl, whoever she was, would have left a child behind her than carried one off!" The face of Dummie waxed big with conscious importance.

"Vell now, you would not believe us; but it vas all true, that 'ere bundle was the voman's child, I spose an unnatural von by the gentleman; she let us into the ouse on condition we helped her off with it. And, blow me tight, but ve paid ourselves vell for our trouble. That 'ere voman was a strange cretur; they say she had been a lord's blowen; but howsomever, she was as otended and hodd as if she had been. There vas hold Nick's keown row made on the matter, and the revard for our (de)tection vas so great, that as you vas not much tried yet, Harry thought it best for to take you vith im down to the country, and told you as ow it vas all a flam about the child in the bundle!"

"Faith," said Ned, "I believed him readily enough; and poor Harry was twisted shortly after, and I went into Ireland for safety, where I stayed two years,—and deuced good claret I got there!"

"So, whiles you vas there," continued Dummie, "poor Judy, the voman, died,—she died in this very ouse, and left the horphan to the (af-)fection of Piggy Lob, who was 'nation fond of it surely! Oh! but I 'members vot a night it vas ven poor Jady died; the vind viatled like mad, and the rain tumbled about as if it had got a holyday; and there the poor creature lay raving just over ed of this room we sits in! Laus-a-me, vot a sight it vas!"

Here Dummie paused, and seemed to recall in imagination the scene he had witnessed; but over the mind of Long Ned a ray of light broke slowly.

"Whew!" said he, lifting up his fore-finger, "whew! I smell a rat; this stolen child, then, was no other than Paul. But, pray, to whom did the house belong? for that fact Harry never communicated to me. I only heard the owner was a lawyer, or parson, or *some such thing*."

"Vy now, I'll tell you, but don't be

[‡] Burglar.

[†] Sold the booty. [‡] Took our shares.

gle-fashy. So, you see, ven Judy dead, and Harry was scragged, I vas the only ven living who vas up to the secret, and when Mother Lob vas a taking a drop to comfort her when Judy went off, I hopes a great box in which poor Judy kept her duds and rattotrap, and surely I finds at the bottom of the box hever so many letters and such like,—for I knew as ow they vas there; so I whips these off and carries 'em one with me, and soon arter, Mother Lob sold me the box o' duds for two quids—'cause vy I vas a rag marchant! So now, I 'solved, since the secret vas all in my hown keeping, to keep it as tight as vinkey: for first, you sees as ow I vas afeard I should be hanged if I vent for to tell—'cause vy I stole a vatch, and lots more, as well as the hurchin; and next I vas afeard as ow the mother might come back and haunt me the same as Self-lamented Villy, for it vas a cruel night when her soul took ving. And hever and above this, Meester Pepper, I thought summat might turn hup by and by, in which it would be best for I to keep my hown counsel and nab the reward, if I hever durst make myself known."

Here Dummie proceeded to narrate how frightened he had been lest Ned should discover all; when as it may be remembered, Pepper informed Paul at the beginning of this history, he encountered that worthy at Dame Luck's house—how this fear had induced him to testify to Pepper that schemes and rascleness which had so enraged the laughing highwayman and how great had been his relief and delight at finding that Ned returned to the Mug no more. He next proceeded to inform his new confidant of his meeting with the father (the anxious reader knows where and when, and of what took place at that event). He said how, in his first negotiation with the father, prudently resolving to communicate drop by

drop such information as he possessed, he merely, besides confessing to a share in the robbery, stated that *he thought* he knew the house, &c. to which the infant had been consigned,—and that, if so, it was still alive; but that he would inquire. He then related how the sanguine father, who saw that hanging Dummie for the robbery of his house might not be half so likely a method to recover his son as bribery and conciliation, not only forgave him his former outrage, but whetted his appetite to the search by rewarding him for his disclosure. He then proceeded to state how, unable any where to find Paul, or any trace of him, he amused the sire from time to time with forged excuses;—how, at first, the sums he received made him by no means desirous to expedite a discovery that would terminate such satisfactory receipts;—how at length the magnitude of the proffered reward, joined to the threats of the sire, had made him become seriously anxious to learn the real fate and present "whereabout" of Paul;—how, the last time he had seen the father, he had, by way of propitiation and first fruit, taken to him all the papers left by the unhappy mother and secreted by himself; and how he was now delighted to find that Ned was acquainted with Paul's address. Since he despaired of finding Paul by his own exertions alone, he became less tenacious of his secret, and he now proffered Ned, on discovery of Paul, a third of that reward the whole of which he had once hoped to engross.

Ned's eyes and mouth opened at this proposition. "But the name,—the name of the father? you have not told me that yet!" cried he impatiently.

"Noo, noo!" said Dummie, archly. "I doesn't tell you all till you tells I summat. Where's little Paul, I say and where be us to get at him!"

Ned heaved a sigh.

"As for the oath," said he, musingly.

ingly, "it would be a sin to keep it, now that to break it can do him no harm, and may do him good: especially as, in case of imprisonment or death, the oath is not held to be binding: yet I fear it is too late for the reward. The father will scarcely thank you for finding his son!—Know, Dummie, that Paul is in — gaol, and that he is one and the same person as Captain Lovett!"

Astonishment never wrote in more legible characters than she now displayed on the rough features of Dummie Dunnaker. So strong are the sympathies of a profession compared

with all others, that Dummie's confused thought *was that of pride*. "The great Captain Lovett!" he faltered. "Little Paul at the top of the profession! Lord, Lord!—I always said as how he'd the ambition to rise!"

"Well, well, but the father's name!"

At this question, the expression of Dummie's face fell,—a sudden horror struggled to his eyes—

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CHAPTER XXXV.

"Why is it that, at moments, there creeps over us an awe, a terror, overpowering but undefined? Why is it that we shudder without a cause, and feel the warm life-blood stand still in its courses? Are the dead too near?"—*Falkland*.

• • • • •

"Ha! sayest thou? Hideous thought, I feel it twine
O'er my lost heart, as curls around his prey
The sure and deadly serpent!"

• • • • •

What! in the hush and in the solitude
Pass'd that dread soul away?"—*Love and Hatred*.

THE evening prior to that morning in which the above conversation occurred, Brandon passed alone in his lodging at * * * *. He had felt himself too unwell to attend the customary wassail, and he sat indolently musing in the solitude of the old-fashioned chamber to which he was assigned. There, two wax-candles on the smooth, quaint table, dimly struggled against the gloom of heavy panels, which were relieved at unfrequent intervals by portraits in oaken frames, dingy, harsh, and important with the pomp of laced garments and flowing wigs. The predilection of the landlady for modern tastes had, indeed, on each side of the huge fire-

place, suspended more novel master-pieces of the fine arts. In emblematic gorgeousness hung the pictures of the four Seasons, buxom wenches all, save Winter, who was deformedly bodied forth in the likeness of an aged carle. These were interspersed by an engraving of Lord Maulerverer, the lieutenant of the neighbouring county, looking extremely majestic in his peer's robes: and by three typifications of Faith, Hope, and Charity—ladies with whom it may be doubted if the gay carle ever before cultivated so close an intimacy. Curtains, of that antique chintz in which fasses of stripes are alternated by rows of flowers, filled the interstices of three

windows; a heavy safe-door occupied the greater portion of one side of the room; and on the opposite side, in the rear of Brandon, a vast screen stretched its slow length along, and relieved the unpopulated and, as it were, absolute comfort of the apartment.

Pain and impatience streamed the light upon Brandon's face as he sat in his large chair, leaning his cheek on one hand, and gazing with the unworldly earnestness of abstraction on the clear fire. At that moment a whole phantasm of gloomy thought was sweeping in successive array across his mind. His early ambition, his ill-omened marriage, the causes of his alienation in the wrong judging world, the first dawn of his reputation, his rapid and flattering success, his present elevation, his aspiring hope of the higher office and more palatial home—*all* these phantasms passed before him in dimmed shadow and light, but ever with each stacked one dominating and dark remembrance—the loss of his only son.

Wasting his ambition with the wish to revive the pride of his hereditary name, every conception of fortune or of fame rendered him yet more anxious to find the only one who could perpetuate those hollow distinctions to his race.

"I shall recover him yet!" he broke out suddenly and aloud. As he spoke, a quick—darting—epistemic pain ran shivering through his whole frame, and then fixed for one instant on his heart with a grip like the snare of a bird. It passed away, and was followed by a drowsy sickness. Brandon rose, and filling himself a large tumbler of water, drank with avidity. The sickness passed off like the passing pain; but the sensation had of late been often felt by Brandon, and disregarded, for few persons were less afflicted with the self-suspense of a physician; but now, that slight, whether it was more keen than usual,

or whether his thought had touched on the string that jars naturally on the most startling of human anticipations, we know not, but, as he resumed his seat, the idea of his approaching dissolution shot like an ice-bolt through his breast.

So intent was this scheming man upon the living objects of the world, and so little were his thoughts accustomed to turn towards the ultimate goal of all things, that this idea obtruding itself abruptly upon him, startled him with a ghastly awe. He felt the colour rush from his cheek, and a tingling and involuntary pain ran wandering through the channels of his blood, even from the roots of the hair to the soles of his feet. But the stern soul of Brandon was not one which shadows could long afflict. He nerved himself to meet the great thought thus forced upon his mental eye, and he gazed on it with a steady and enduring look.

"Well," thought he, "is my hour coming, or have I yet the ordinary term of mortal nature to expect? It is true, I have lately suffered these strange revulsions of the frame with somewhat of an alarming frequency: perhaps this medicine, which healed the anguish of one infirmity, has produced another more immediately deadly! Yet why should I think thus? My sleep is sound and calm, my habits temperate, my mind active and clear as in the best days. In my youth, I never played the traitor with my constitution; why should it desert me at the very threshold of my age? Nay, nay, these are but passing twitches, chills of the blood that begin to wax thin. Shall I learn to be less rigorous in my diet? Perhaps wine may reward my abstinence in availing it for my luxuries, by becoming a stimulant to my nervousness! Ah, I will consult—I will consult, I must not do yet. I have—but see, there—four gradus to walk before the

ladder is scaled. And, above all, I must regain my child! Lucy married to Mauleverer, myself a peer, my son wedded to—whom? Pray God he be not married already! My nephews and my children nobles! the house of Brandon restored, my power high in the upward gaze of men; my fame set on a more lasting basis than a skill in the quirks of law: these are yet to come, these I will not die till I have enjoyed! Men die not till their destinies are fulfilled. The spirit that swells and soars within me says that the destiny of William Brandon is but half begun!”

With this conclusion, Brandon sought his pillow. What were the reflections of the prisoner whom he was to judge? Need we ask? Let us picture to ourselves his shattered health, the languor of sickness heightening the gloom which makes the very air of a gaol,—his certainty of the doom to be passed against him, his knowledge that the uncle of Lucy Brandon was to be his judge, that Mauleverer was to be his accuser; and that in all human probability the only woman he had ever loved must sooner or later learn the criminality of his life and the ignominy of his death: let us but glance at the above blackness of circumstances that surrounded him, and it would seem that there is but little doubt as to the complexion of his thoughts! Perhaps, indeed, even in that terrible and desolate hour, one sweet face shone on him, “and dashed the darkness all away.” Perhaps, too, whatever might be the stings of his conscience, one thought, one remembrance of a temptation mastered, and a sin escaped, brought to his eyes tears that were sweet and healing in their source. But the heart of a man, in Clifford’s awful situation, is dark and inscrutable; and often, when the wildest and gloomiest external circumstances surround us, their reflection sleeps

like a shadow, calm and still upon the mind.

The next morning, the whole town of * * * * (a town in which, we regret to say, an accident once detained us for three wretched days, and which we can, speaking therefore from profound experience, assert to be in ordinary times the most melancholy and peopleless-looking congregation of houses that a sober imagination can conceive,) exhibited a scene of such bustle, animation, and jovial anxiety, as the trial for life or death to a fellow-creature can alone excite in the phlegmatic breasts of the English. Around the court the crowd thickened with every moment, until the whole market-place, in which the town-hall was situated, became one living mass. The windows of the houses were filled with women, some of whom had taken that opportunity to make parties to breakfast; and little round tables, with tea and toast on them, caught the eyes of the grinning mobbists as they gaped impatiently upwards.

“Ben,” said a stout yeoman, tossing up a halfpenny, and catching the said coin in his right hand, which he immediately covered with the left,—“Ben, heads or tails that Lovett is hanged; heads hanged, tails not, for a crown.”

“Petticoats, to be sure,” quoth Ben, eating an apple; and it was heads!

“Damme, you’ve lost!” cried the yeoman, rubbing his rough hands with glee.

It would have been a fine sight for Asmodeus, could he have perched on one of the housetops of the market-place of * * * *, and looked on the murmuring and heaving sea of mortality below. Oh! the sight of a crowd round a court of law, or a gibbet, ought to make the devil split himself with laughter.

While the mob was fretting, and pushing, and swearing, and grinning,

and beating, and picking pockets, and tramping feet and wearing gowns, and committing murder and murder to the laws and wisdom of the court, Brandon was slowly consulting his abundant report preparatory to attendance on his judicial duties. His footman entered with a letter. Sir William glanced rapidly over the seal and of those antiseptic sentences of wax and at that day, adorned with a laurel wreath of arms surmounted with his noble coronet, and decorated on either side with those supporters so dear to heraldic taste. He then tore open the letter, and read as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,

"You know that, in the last conversation I had the honour to hold with you, I alluded, though perhaps somewhat distantly, to the esteem which His Majesty had personally expressed for your principles and talents, and his wish to testify it at the earliest opportunity. There will be as you are doubtless aware, an immediate gratification of four paragraphs. Your name stands second on the list. The pleasure of His Majesty graciously leaves to you; but he has hinted, that the remarkable antiquity of your family would make him best pleased were you to select the name of your own family seat, which, if I mistake not, is Warlock. You will instruct me at your leisure as to the manner in which the patent should be made out, touching the names, &c. Perhaps to secure the honour of an old friend, this patent may be done you to break your long cherished silence. I need not add that this accession of rank will be accompanied by professional elevation. You will see by the papers that the death of ***** leaves vacant the dignity of Chief Baron; and I am at length empowered to offer you a station

proportioned to your character and talents.

"With great consideration,
"Believe me, my dear Sir,
"Very truly yours,

"—

"(Private and Confidential)"

Brandon's dark eye glanced quickly from the signature of the Premier, affixed to this communication, towards the mirror opposite him. He strode to it, and examined his own countenance with a long and wistful gaze. Never, we think, did youthful gallant about to repair to the trysting spot, in which fair looks make the greatest of earthly advantages, gaze more anxiously on the impartial glass than now did the æsthetic and scornful judge; and never, we woen, did the eye of the said gallant retire with a more satisfied and triumphant expression.

"Yes, yes!" muttered the judge. "No sign of infirmity is yet written here; the blood flows clear and warm enough, the cheek looks firm too, and passing full, for one who was always of the lean kind. Ah! this letter is a cordial, an *elixir vite*. I feel as if a new lease were granted to the reluctant tenant. Lord Warlock, the first Baron of Warlock,—Lord Chief Baron.—What next!"

As he spoke he strode unconsciously away, folding his arms with that sort of pensive and complacent gesture which implies the idea of a man hugging himself in a silent delight. Amazingly, had the most skilful physician then looked upon the ardent and all-lighted face, the firm step, the elastic and muscular frame, the vigorous air of Brandon, as he mentally continued his colloquy, he would have predicted for him as fair a grasp on longevity as the chances of mortal life will allow. He was interrupted by the servant entering.

"It is twenty-five minutes after nine, sir," said he, respectfully.

"Sir,—*sir!*" repeated Brandon.

"Ah, well! so late!"

"Yes, sir, and the sheriff's carriage is almost at the door."

"Humph,—Minister,—Peer,—Warlock,—succession.—My son, my son!—would to God that I could find thee!"

Such were Brandon's last thoughts as he left the room. It was with great difficulty, so dense was the crowd, that the judge drove up to the court. As the carriage slowly passed, the spectators pressed to the windows of the vehicle, and stood on tiptoe to catch a view of the celebrated lawyer. Brandon's face, never long indicative of his feelings, had now settled into its usual gravity, and the severe loftiness of his look chilled, while it satisfied, the curiosity of the vulgar. It had been ordered that no person should be admitted until the judge had taken his seat on the bench; and this order occasioned so much delay, owing to the accumulated pressure of the vast and miscellaneous group, that it was more than half an hour before the court was able to obtain that decent order suiting the solemnity of the occasion. At five minutes before ten, an universal and indescribable movement announced that the prisoner was put to the bar. We read in one of the journals of that day, that "on being put to the bar, the prisoner looked round with a long and anxious gaze, which at length settled on the judge, and then dropped, while the prisoner was observed to change countenance slightly. Lovett was dressed in a plain dark suit; he seemed to be about six feet high; and though thin and worn, probably from the effect of his wound and imprisonment, he is remarkably well made, and exhibits the outward appearance of that great personal strength which he is said to possess,

and which is not unfrequently the characteristic of daring criminals. His face is handsome and prepossessing, his eyes and hair dark, and his complexion pale, possibly from the effects of his confinement; there was a certain sternness in his countenance during the greater part of the trial. His behaviour was remarkably collected and composed. The prisoner listened with the greatest attention to the indictment, which the reader will find in another part of our paper, charging him with the highway robbery of Lord Mauleverer, on the night of the — of — last. He occasionally inclined his body forward, and turned his ear towards the court; and he was observed, as the jury were sworn, to look steadily in the face of each. He breathed thick and hard when the various aliases he had assumed, Howard, Cavendish, Jackson, &c., were read; but smiled, with an unaccountable expression, when the list was completed, as if exulting at the varieties of his ingenuity. At twenty-five minutes past ten, Mr. Dyebright, the counsel for the crown, stated the case to the jury."

Mr. Dyebright was a lawyer of great eminence; he had been a Whig all his life, but had latterly become remarkable for his insincerity, and subservience to the wishes of the higher powers. His talents were peculiar and effective. If he had little eloquence, he had much power; and his legal knowledge was sound and extensive. Many of his brethren excelled him in display; but no one, like him, possessed the secret of addressing a jury. Winningly familiar; seemingly candid to a degree that scarcely did justice to his cause, as if he were in an agency test he should persuade you to lean a hair-breadth more on his side of the case than justice would allow; apparently all made up of good, homely, virtuous feeling, a disinterested regard for truth, a blunt

— or loyalty, seasoned with a few possible beside prejudices, which always come home to the hearts of your fathers of families and thoughtful Britons, versed in all the sciences of language, and the science of actions. If he were defending some wretched being it misfortune; it was a misfortune, constantly calling a crime. — Mr. Dyebright was exactly the man born to pervert justice, to tackle jurors, to cozen truth with a friendly smile, and to obtain a vast reputation as an excellent advocate. He began by a long preliminary flourish on the importance of the case. He said that he should, with the most scrupulous delicacy, avoid every remark calculated to raise unnecessary prejudice against the prisoner. He should not allude to his unhappy notoriety, his associations with the lowest dogs. — (Here up stepped the counsel for the prisoner, and Mr. Dyebright was called to order.) "God knows," resumed the learned gentleman, looking wisely at the jury, "that my learned friend might have spared himself this warning. God knows that I would rather fly of the wretched inmates of this court's goal were to escape unharmed, than that a host of the prisoner you behold at the bar should be unjustly punished. The sin of a human being is at stake; we should be guilty and calm of a crime, which on our death beds we should tremble to recall, were we to suffer any consideration, whether of interest or of prejudice, or of what fear for our own prosperity and lives, to bias us even to the turning of a straw against the unfortunate prisoner. Gentlemen, if you find me travelling a single inch from my case — if you find me saying a single word calculated to harm the prisoner in your eyes, and unsupported by the evidence I shall call, then I implore you not to depend upon the vigilance of my learned

friend, but to treasure these *my* errors in your recollection, and to consider them as so many arguments in favour of the prisoner. If, gentlemen, I *could* by any possibility imagine that your verdict would be favourable to the prisoner, I can, unaffectedly and from the bottom of my heart, declare to you that I should rejoice; a case might be lost, but a fellow-creature would be saved! Callous as we of the legal profession are believed, we have feelings like you; and I ask any one of you, gentlemen of the jury, any one who has ever felt the pleasures of social intercourse, the joys of charity, the heart's reward of benevolence, — I ask any one of you, whether, if he were placed in the arduous situation I now hold, all the persuasions of vanity would not vanish at once from his mind, and whether his defeat as an advocate would not be rendered dear to him, by the common and fleshly sympathies of a man! But, gentlemen (Mr. Dyebright's voice at once deepened and faltered), there is a duty, a painful duty, we owe to our country; and never, in the long course of my professional experience, do I remember an instance in which it was more called forth than in the present. Mercy, gentlemen, is dear, very dear to us all; but it is the deadliest injury we can inflict on mankind, when it is bought at the expense of justice."

The learned gentleman then, after a few further profatory observations, proceeded to state how, on the night of — last, Lord Maithever was stopped and robbed by three men masked, of a sum of money amounting to above three hundred and fifty pounds, a diamond snuff-box, rings, watch, and a mass of most valuable jewels, — how Lord Maithever, in endeavouring to defend himself, had passed a bullet through the clothes of one of the robbers. — Now, it would be proved, that the garments of the prisoner,

found in a cave in Oxfordshire, and positively sworn to by a witness he should produce, exhibited a rent similar to such a one as a bullet would produce,—how, moreover, it would be positively sworn to by the same witness, that the prisoner Lovett had come to the cavern with two accomplices not yet taken up, since their rescue by the prisoner, and boasted of the robbery he had just committed; that in the clothes and sleeping apartment of the robber the articles stolen from Lord Mauleverer were found, and that the purse containing the notes for three hundred pounds, the only thing the prisoner could probably have obtained time to carry off with him, on the morning in which the cave was entered by the policemen, was found on his person on the day on which he had attempted the rescue of his comrades, and had been apprehended in that attempt. He stated, moreover, that the dress found in the cavern, and sworn to by one witness he should produce, as belonging to the prisoner, answered exactly to the description of the clothes worn by the principal robber, and sworn to by Lord Mauleverer, his servant, and the postillions. In like manner, the colour of one of the horses found in the cavern corresponded with that rode by the highwayman. On these circumstantial proofs, aided by the immediate testimony of the king's evidence (that witness whom he should produce), he rested a case which could, he averred, leave no doubt on the minds of any impartial jury." Such, briefly and plainly alleged, made the substance of the details entered into by the learned counsel, who then proceeded to call his witnesses. The evidence of Lord Mauleverer (who was staying at Mauleverer Park, which was within a few miles of * * * *), was short and clear; (it was noticed as a singular circumstance, that at the end of the evidence the prisoner,

bowled respectfully to his lordship.) The witness of the postillions and of the valet was no less concise; nor could all the ingenuity of Clifford's counsel shake any part of their evidence in his cross-examination. The main witness depended on by the crown was now summoned, and the solemn countenance of Peter Mac Grawler rose on the eyes of the jury. One look of cold and blighting contempt fell on him from the eye of the prisoner, who did not again deign to regard him during the whole of his examination.

The witness of Mac Grawler was delivered with a pomposity worthy of the ex-editor of "the Asinæum." Nevertheless, by the skill of Mr. Dye-bright, it was rendered sufficiently clear a story to leave an impression on the jury damnatory to the interests of the prisoner. The counsel on the opposite side was not slow in perceiving the ground acquired by the adverse party; so, clearing his throat, he rose with a sneering air to the cross-examination.

"So, so!" began Mr. Botheram, putting on a pair of remarkably large spectacles, wherewith he truculently regarded the witness,—“so, so, Mr. MacGrawler,—is that your name? eh! Ah, it is, is it? a very very respectable name it is too, I warrant. Well, sir, look at me. Now, on your oath, remember, were you ever the editor of a certain thing published every Wednesday, and called the *Attensæum*, or ‘the *Asinæum*,’ or some such name?”

Commencing with this insidious and self-damnatory question, the learned counsel then proceeded, as artfully as he was able, through a series of interrogatories, calculated to injure the character, the respectable character, of Mac Grawler, and weaken his testimony in the eyes of the jury. He succeeded in exciting in the audience that feeling of merriment,

wherein the vulgar are always so disposed to intersperse the dull commonplaces of their own human being. But though the jury seems even grinning, they were not convinced. The Solicitor-general, from the witness-box, "swatted," perhaps, in reputation, but not "killed" as to testimony. It was just before this witness concluded that Lord Mansfield ordered to be handed to the judge a small slip of paper, containing merely these words in pencil:—

"**LORD BRANSON.**—A dinner waits you at Mansfield Park, only three miles hence. Lord — and the Bishop of — meet you. Plenty of roses here, London, and a letter about you, which I will show to no one till we meet. Make haste and hang this post-bill, but I may see you the sooner, and it is bad for both of us to wait long for a regular meal like dinner. I can't stay longer, it is so hot, and my nerves were always susceptible.

" Yours,

" **MAULEVERER.**

" If you will come, give me a nod. You know my hour—it is always the same."

The judge glancing over the note, raised his head gravely to the earl, who withdrew; and in one minute afterwards, a heavy and breathless silence fell over the whole court. The prisoner was called upon for his defence; it was singular what a different sensation to that existing in their breasts the moment before, crept thrillingly through the audience. Hushed was every whisper—watched was every countenance that the late cross-examination had excited; a sudden and chilling sense of the dread importance of the tribunal made itself abruptly felt in the minds of every one present.

Perhaps, as in the gloomy attire of Hogarth (the moral Mephistopheles

of painters), the close neighbourhood of pain to mirth made the former come with the homelier shock to the heart—be that as it may, a freezing anxiety numbing the pulse, and stirring through the air, made every man in that various crowd feel a sympathy of awe with his neighbour, excepting only the hardened judge and the hackneyed lawyers, and one spectator, an idiot who had thrust himself in with the general press, and stood, within a few paces of the prisoner, grinning unconsciously, and every now and then winking with a glassy eye at some one at a distance, whose vigilance he had probably eluded.

The face and aspect, even the attitude of the prisoner, were well fitted to heighten the effect which would naturally have been created by any man under the same fearful doom. He stood at the very front of the bar, and his tall and noble figure was drawn up to its full height; a glow of excitement spread itself gradually over features at all times striking, and lighted an eye naturally eloquent, and to which various emotions at that time gave a more than commonly deep and impressive expression. He began thus:—

" My lord, I have little to say, and I may at once relieve the anxiety of my counsel, who now looks wistfully upon me, and add, that that little will scarcely embrace the object of defence. Why should I defend myself? Why should I endeavour to protract a life that a few days, more or less, will terminate, according to the ordinary calculations of chance? Such as it is, and has been, my life is vowed to the law, and the law will have the offering. Could I escape from this indictment, I know that seven others await me, and that by one or the other of these my conviction and my sentence must come. I am now to all of us my lord; and were it possible

that mine could be spared yet a while, that continued life might make a better atonement for past actions than a death which, abrupt and premature, calls for repentance while it forfords redress.

"But, when the dark side of things is our only choice, it is useless to regard the bright; idle to fix our eyes upon life, when death is at hand; useless to speak of contrition, when we are denied its proof. It is the usual policy of prisoners in my situation to address the feelings and flatter the prejudices of the jury; to descant on the excellence of our laws, while they endeavour to disarm them; to praise justice, yet demand mercy; to talk of expecting acquittal, yet boast of submitting without a murmur to condemnation. For me, to whom all earthly interests are dead, this policy is idle and superfluous. I hesitate not to tell you, my lord judge—to proclaim to you, gentlemen of the jury, that the laws which I have broken through my life I despise in death! Your laws are but of two classes; the one makes criminals, the other punishes them. I have suffered by the one—I am about to perish by the other.

"My lord, it was the turn of a straw which made me what I am. Seven years ago I was sent to the house of correction for an offence which I did not commit; I went thither, a boy who had never infringed a single law—I came forth, in a few weeks, a man who was prepared to break all laws! Whence was this change?—was it my fault, or that of my condemners? You had first wronged me by a punishment which I did not deserve—you wronged me yet more deeply, when (even had I been guilty of the first offence) I was sentenced to herd with hardened offenders, and graduates in vice and vice's methods of support. The laws themselves caused me to break the laws: first, by im-

planting within me the goading sense of injustice; secondly, by submitting me to the corruption of example. Thus, I repeat—and I trust my words will sink solemnly into the hearts of all present—your legislation made me what I am! and it now *destroys me, as it has destroyed thousands for being what it made me!* But for this the first aggression on me, I might have been what the world terms honest,—I might have advanced to old age and a peaceful grave, through the harmless cheateries of trade, or the honoured falsehoods of a profession. Nay, I might have supported the laws which I have now braved: like the counsel opposed to me, I might have grown sleek on the vices of others, and advanced to honour by my ingenuity in hanging my fellow-creatures! The canting and prejudging part of the press has affected to set before you the merits of 'honest ability,' or 'laborious trade,' in opposition to my offences. What, I beseech you, are the props of your 'honest' exertion—the profits of 'trade!' Are there no bribes to menials? Is there no adulteration of goods? Are the rich never duped in the price they pay?—are the poor never wronged in the quality they receive? Is there honesty in the bread you eat, in a single necessity which clothes, or feeds, or warms you? Let those whom the law protects consider it a protector: when did it ever protect *me*? When did it ever protect the poor man? The government of a state, the institutions of law, profess to provide for all those who 'obey.' Mark! a man hungers—do you feed him? He is naked—do you clothe him? If not, you break your covenant, you drive him back to the first law of nature, and you hang him, not because he is guilty, but because you have left him naked and starving! (A murmur among the mob below, with great difficulty silenced.) One

thing only I will add, and that not to waste your mercy. No, not to invest my life with an idle and momentary interest, but because there are some persons in this world who have not known me as the criminal who stands before you, and whom the tidings of my fate may hereafter reach; and I would not have those persons view me in blacker colours than I deserve. Among all the rumour, gentlemen, that have reached you, through all the tales and fables kindled from my unhappy notoriety and my approaching doom, I put it to you, if you have heard that I have committed one summary action, or one ruinous and deliberate fraud! You have heard that I have lived by the plunder of the rich—I do not deny the charge. From the grinding of the poor, the technical overreaching, or the systematic pillaging of my neighbours, my conscience is as free as it is from the charge of cruelty and bloodshed. These errors I leave to honest mediocrity or virtuous exertion! You may perhaps find, too, that my life has not passed through a career of outrage without scattering some few benefits in the road. In destroying me, it is true that you will have the consolation to think, that among the benefits you derive from my sentence, will be the salutary encouragement you give to other offenders to offend to the last degree, and to divert outrage of no single aggravation! But if this does not seem to you any very powerful argument, you may pause before you cut off from all amendment a man who seems neither wholly hardened nor utterly beyond amendment. My lord, my counsel would have wished to examine witnesses,—some to bear testimony to redeeming points in my own character, others to contradict the oath of the witness against me—a man whom I saved from instruction in order that he might testify me. I do not think either

necessary. The public press has already said of me what little good does not shock the truth; and had I not possessed something of those qualities which society does not disesteem, you would not have beheld me here at this hour! If I had saved myself as well as my companions, I should have left this country, perhaps for ever, and commenced a very different career abroad. I committed offences; I cheated you; I committed what, in my case, was an act of duty: I am seized, and I perish. But the weakness of my body destroys me, not the strength of your malice. Had I caved as the prisoner spake, the haughty and rapid motion, the *calvarying of the form*, produced by the passion of the moment, made impressively conspicuous to all the remarkable power of his frame,—had I but my wonted health, my wonted command over those limbs and those veins, I would have asked no friend, no ally, to favour my escape. I tell you, engines and guardians of the law, that I would have mocked your chains, and defied your walls, as ye know that I have mocked and defied them before. But my blood creeps now only in drops through its courses, and the heart that I had of old stirr'd feebly and heavily within me." The prisoner paused a moment, and resumed in an altered tone—"Leaving then, my own character to the ordeal of report, I cannot perhaps do better than leave to the same criterion that of the witness against me. I will candidly own that, under other circumstances, it might have been otherwise. I will candidly avow that I might have then used such means as your law awards me to procure an acquittal and to prolong my existence,—though in a new scene: as it is, what matters the cause in which I receive my sentence? Nay, it is even better to suffer by the first than to linger to the last. It is some cause

action not again to stand where I now stand : to go through the humbling solemnities which I have this day endured ; to see the smile of some, and retort the frown of others ; to wrestle with the anxiety of the heart, and to depend on the caprice of the excited nerves. It is something to feel one part of the drama of disgrace is over, and that I may wait unmolested in my den until, for one time only, I am again the butt of the unthinking and the monster of the crowd. My lord, I have now done ! To you, whom the law deems the prisoner's counsel,—to you, gentlemen of the jury, to whom it has delegated his fate, I leave the chances of my life."

The prisoner ceased ; but the same heavy silence which, save when broken by one solitary murmur, had lain over the court during his speech, still continued even for several moments after that deep and firm voice had died on the ear. So different had been the defence of the prisoner from that which had been expected ; so assuredly did the more hackneyed part of the audience, even as he had proceeded, imagine that, by some artful turn, he would at length wind into the usual courses of defence, that when his unflinching and almost stern accents paused, men were not prepared to feel that his speech was finished, and the pause involuntarily jarred on them, as untimely and abrupt. At length, when each of the audience slowly awoke to the conviction that the prisoner had indeed concluded his harangue, a movement, eloquent of feelings released from a suspense which had been perhaps the more earnest and the more blended with awe, from the boldness and novelty of the words on which it hung, circled round the court. The jurors looked confusedly at each other, but not one of them spoke even by a whisper ; their feelings, which had

been aroused by the speech of the prisoner, had not, from its shortness, its singularity, and the haughty impolicy of its tone, been so far guided by its course, as to settle into any state of mind clearly favourable to him, or the reverse ; so that each man waited for his neighbour to speak first, in order that he might find, as it were, in another, a kind of clue to the indistinct and excited feelings which wanted utterance in himself.

The judge, who had been from the first attracted by the air and aspect of the prisoner, had perhaps, notwithstanding the hardness of his mind, more approvingly than any one present, listened to the defence ; for in the scorn of the hollow institutions, and the mock honesty of social life, so defyingly manifested by the prisoner, Brandon recognised elements of mind remarkably congenial to his own ; and this sympathy was heightened by the hardihood of physical nerve and moral intrepidity displayed by the prisoner ; qualities which, among men of a similar mould, often form the strongest motive of esteem, and sometimes (as we read of in the Imperial Corsican and his chiefs) the only point of attraction ! Brandon was, however, soon recalled to his cold self by a murmur of vague applause circling throughout the common crowd, among whom the general impulse always manifests itself first, and to whom the opinions of the prisoner, though but imperfectly understood, came more immediately home than they did to the better and richer classes of the audience. Ever alive to the decorums of form, Brandon instantly ordered silence in the court ; and when it was again restored, and it was fully understood that the prisoner's defence had closed, the judge proceeded to sum up.

It is worthy of remark, that many of the qualities of mind which seem most unamiable in private life often

condemns with a singular felicity to the ends of justice, and thus the strong firmness characteristic of Brandon was a main cause which made him admirable as a judge. For men like these are no less from their feelings than their interests.

Glancing over his notes, the judge turned himself to the jury, and began with that silver ringing voice which particularly distinguished Brandon's eloquence, and entered with it on such matters so majestic and commanding a tone of persuasion. He pointed out with a clear brevity, the various points of the evidence; he dwelt for a moment on the attempt to cast discredit upon the testimony of Macomber—but called a proper attention to the fact, that the attempt had been unsupported by witnesses or proof. As he proceeded, the impression made by the prisoner on the minds of the jury slowly melted away; and perhaps so much do men soften when they behold clearly the face of a fellow-man dependent on them for life, it acted dissuavely on the interests of Clifford, that, during the summing up, he bent back in the dark, and prevented his countenance from being seen. When the evidence had been gone through, the judge concluded thus:—

"The prisoner, who, in his defence, has two principles and opinions of which I now further to comment, certainly exhibited the signs of a superior education, and a high though perverted ability, has alluded to the reports circulated by the public press, and bent some little stress on the various anecdotes tending to his advantage, which he supposes have reached your ears. I am by no means willing that the prisoner should be deprived of whatever benefit may be derivable from such a source; but it is not in this place, nor at this moment, that it can avail him. All you have to consider is the evidence be-

fore you. All on which you have to decide is, whether the prisoner be or be not guilty of the robbery of which he is charged. You must not waste a thought on what redeems or heightens a supposed crime—you must only decide on the crime itself. Put away from your minds, I beseech you, all that interferes with the main case. Put away also from your motives of decision all forethought of other possible inclinations to which the prisoner has alluded, but with which you are necessarily unacquainted. If you doubt the evidence, whether of one witness or of all, the prisoner must receive from you the benefit of that doubt. If not, you are sworn to a solemn oath, which ordains you to forgo all minor considerations—which compels you to watch narrowly that you be not influenced by the infirmities natural to us all, but criminal in you, to lean towards the side of a mercy that would be rendered by your oath a perjury to God, and by your duty as impartial citizens, a treason to your country. I dismiss you to the grave consideration of the important case you have heard; and I trust that He to whom all hearts are open and all secrets are known, will grant you the temper and the judgment to form a right decision!"

There was in the majestic aspect and thrilling voice of Brandon something which made the commonest form of words solemn and impressive; and the hypocrite, aware of this facility of manner, generally, as now, added weight to his concluding words by a religious allusion or a Scriptural phraseology. He ceased, and the jury, recovering the effect of his adjuration, consulted for a moment among themselves; the foreman then, addressing the court on behalf of his fellow-jurors, requested leave to retire for deliberation. An attendant bailiff being sworn in, we read in the journals of the day, which noted the divi-

sions of time with that customary scrupulosity rendered terrible by the reflection how soon all time and seasons may perish for the hero of the scene, that "it was at twenty-five minutes to two that the jury withdrew."

Perhaps in the whole course of a criminal trial there is no period more awful than that occupied by the deliberation of the jury. In the present case, the prisoner, as if acutely sensible of his situation, remained in the rear of the dock, and buried his face in his hands. They who stood near him observed, however, that his breast did not seem to swell with the convulsive emotion customary to persons in his state, and that not even a sigh or agitated movement escaped him. The jury had been absent about twenty minutes, when a confused noise was heard in the court. The face of the judge turned in commanding severity towards the quarter whence it proceeded. He perceived a man of a coarse garb and mean appearance endeavouring, rudely and violently, to push his way through the crowd towards the bench, and at the same instant he saw one of the officers of the court approaching the disturber of its tranquillity, with no friendly intent. The man, aware of the purpose of the constable, exclaimed with great vehemence, "I will give this to my lord the judge, blow me if I won't!" and as he spoke, he raised high above his head a soiled scrap of paper folded awkwardly in the shape of a letter. The instant Brandon's eye caught the rugged features of the intrusive stranger, he motioned with rather less than his usual slowness of gesture to one of his official satellites. "Bring me that paper instantly!" he whispered.

The officer bowed and obeyed. The man, who seemed a little intoxicated, gave it with a look of ludicrous triumph and self-importance.

"Stand away, man!" he added to

the constable, who now laid hand on his collar—"you'll see vot the judge says to that 'ere bit of paper; and so vill the prisoner, poor fellow!"

This scene, so unworthy the dignity of the court, attracted the notice and (immediately around the intruder) the merriment of the crowd, and many an eye was directed towards Brandon, as with calm gravity he opened the note and glanced over the contents. In a large school-boy hand—it was the hand of Long Ned—were written these few words:

"MY LORD JUDGE,

"I make bold to beg you will do all you can for the prisoner at the barre; as he is no other than the 'Paul' I spoke to your Worship about. You know what I mean.

"DUMMIE DUNNAKER."

As he read this note, the judge's head was observed to droop suddenly, as if by a sickness or a spasm; but he recovered himself instantly, and whispering the officer who brought him the note, said, "See that that madman be immediately removed from the court, and lock him up alone. He is so deranged as to be dangerous!"

The officer lost not a moment in seeing the order executed. Three stout constables dragged the astounded Dummie from the court in an instant, yet the more ruthlessly for his ejaculating—

"Eh, sire, what's this! I tells you I have saved the judge's hown flesh and blood. Vy now, gently there; you'll smart for this, my fine fellow! Never you mind, Paul, my arty: I've done you a pure good—"

"Silence!" proclaimed the voice of the judge, and that voice came forth with so commanding a tone of power that it awed Dummie, despite his intoxication. In a moment more, and, ere he had time to recover, he

was without the court. During this strange lull, which nevertheless scarcely lasted above two or three minutes, the prisoner had not once lifted his head, nor appeared aroused in any manner from his torpor. And surely had the intruder been with them had he the jury returned.

The verdict was as all had foreseen, "Guilty," but it was coupled with a strong recommendation to mercy.

The prisoner was then asked, in the usual form, whether he had to say anything way sentence of death should not be passed against him?

As time stood words struck upon his ear, slowly the prisoner rose. He directed first towards the jury a brief and keen glance, and his eyes then rested fast, and with a stern significance, on the face of his judge.

"My lord," he began, "I have but one reason to advance against the sentence of the law. If you have interest to prevent or mitigate it, that reason will, I think, suffice to induce you on my behalf. I said that the first cause of those offences against the law which bring me to this bar, was the committing me to prison on a charge of which I was wholly innocent. My lord judge, you were the man who accused me of that charge, and subjected me to that imprisonment. Look at me well, my lord, and you may trace in the countenance of the wretched felon you are about to sentence to death the features of a boy whom, some seven years ago, you accused before a London magistrate of the theft of your watch. On the neck of a man who has one step on the threshold of death, the prosecution was unjust. And fit minister of the laws you represent, you, who will soon pass my doom, you were the cause of my crime." My lord, I have done. I am ready to add another to the long and dark list of victims who are first polluted, and then

sacrificed, by the blindness and the injustice of human codes!"

While Clifford spoke, every eye turned from him to the judge, and every one was appalled by the ghastly and fearful change which had fallen over Brandon's face. Men said afterwards, that they saw written there, in terrible distinctness, the characters of death; and there certainly seemed something awful and preternatural in the bloodless and haggard calmness of his proud features. Yet his eye did not quail, nor the muscles of his lip quiver; and with even more than his wonted loftiness, he met the regard of the prisoner. But, as alone conspicuous throughout the motionless and breathless crowd, the judge and criminal gazed upon each other, and as the eyes of the spectators wandered on each, a thrilling and electric impression of a powerful likeness between the doomed and the doomer, for the first time in the trial, struck upon the audience, and increased, though they scarcely knew why, the sensation of pain and dread which the prisoner's last words excited. Perhaps it might have chiefly arisen from a common expression of fierce emotion conquered by an iron and stern character of mind, or perhaps, now that the ashy paleness of exhaustion had surrounded the excited flush on the prisoner's face, the similarity of complexion thus obtained, made the likeness more obvious than before; or perhaps, the spectators had not hitherto fixed so searching, or, if we may so speak, so alternating a gaze upon the two. However that be, the resemblance between the men, placed as they were in such widely different circumstances—that resemblance which, as we have hinted, had at certain moments occurred startlingly to Lucy—was plain and unmissably striking the same the dark hue of their complexions, the same the haughty and Roman outline of their faces, the same the

height of the forehead, the same even a displeasing and sarcastic rigidity of mouth, which made the most conspicuous feature in Brandon, and which was the only point that deteriorated from the singular beauty of Clifford. But, above all, the same inflexible, defying, stubborn spirit, though in Brandon it assumed the stately cast of majesty, and in Clifford it seemed the desperate sternness of the bravo, stamped itself in both. Though Clifford ceased, he did not resume his seat, but stood in the same attitude as that in which he had reversed the order of things, and merged the petitioner in the accuser. And Brandon himself, without speaking or moving, continued still to survey him. So, with erect fronts, and marble countenances, in which what was defying and resolute did not altogether quell the mortal leaven of pain and dread, they looked as might have looked the two men in the Eastern story, who had the power of gazing each other unto death.

What, at that moment, was raging in Brandon's heart, it is in vain to guess. He doubted not for a moment that he beheld before him his long-lost, his anxiously demanded son! Every fibre, every corner of his complex and gloomy soul, that certainty reached, and blasted with a hideous and irresistible glare. The earliest, perhaps the strongest, though often the least acknowledged principle of his mind, was the desire to rebuild the fallen honours of his house; its last scene he now beheld before him, covered with the darkest ignominies of the law! He had coveted worldly honours; he beheld their legitimate successor in a convicted felon! He had garnered the few affections he had spared from the objects of pride and ambition, in his son. That son he was about to adjudge to the gibbet and the hangman! Of late, he had increased the hopes of regaining his

lost treasure, even to an exultant certainty. Lo! the hopes were accomplished! How! With these thoughts warring, in what manner we dare not even by an epithet express, within him, we may cast one hasty glance on the horror of aggravation they endured, when he heard the prisoner accuse HIM, as the cause of his present doom, and felt himself at once the murderer and the judge of his son!

Minutes had elapsed since the voice of the prisoner ceased; and Brandon now drew forth the black cap. As he placed it slowly over his brows, the increasing and corpse-like whiteness of his face became more glaringly visible, by the contrast which this dread head-gear presented. Twice as he essayed to speak his voice failed him, and an indistinct murmur came forth from his hueless lips, and died away like a fitful and feeble wind. But with the third effort, the resolution and long self-tyranny of the man conquered, and his voice went clear and unfaltering through the crowd, although the severe sweetness of its wonted tones was gone, and it sounded strange and hollow on the ears that drank it.

"Prisoner at the bar!—It has become my duty to announce to you the close of your mortal career. You have been accused of a daring robbery, and, after an impartial trial, a jury of your countrymen and the laws of your country have decided against you. The recommendation to mercy"—(here, only, throughout his speech, Brandon gasped convulsively for breath)—"so humanely added by the jury, shall be forwarded to the supreme power, but I cannot flatter you with much hope of its success"—(the lawyers looked with some surprise at each other: they had expected a far more unqualified mandate, to abjure *all* hope from the jury's recommendation).—"Prisoner! for the opinions you have expressed, you are now only

answerable to your God; I forbear to answer them. For the charge you have made against me, whether true or false, and for the anguish it has given me, may you find pardon at another tribunal! It remains for me only—under a reserve too slight, as I have said, to shed you a *fair* promise of happiness—to—*to—*all eyes were on Brandon—he felt it, exerted himself for a last effort, and proceeded,—to pronounce on you the sharp sentence of the law! It is, that you be taken back to the prison whence you came, and thence (when the supreme authority shall appoint) to the place of execution, to be there hanged by the neck till you are dead; and the Lord God Almighty have mercy on your soul!”

With this address concluded that eventful trial; and while the crowd, in rushing and noisy tumult, bore towards the door, Brandon, according to the best, with a Spartan bravery, the impetuosity which was growing at his entrance, rushed from the awful pageant. For the next half hour he was crowded up with the strange intruder on the proceedings of the court. At the end of that time the stranger was dismissed; and in about five he the same robed Brandon's servant reappeared, accompanied by another man, with a slouched hat, and in a common frock. The reader need not be told that the new comers was the friendly Ned, whose testimony was indeed a valuable corroborative to Brandon's, and whose regard for Clifford acted by an appetite for rewards, had induced him to venture to the town of * * *, although he tarried concealed in a safe suburb until reassured by a written promise from Brandon of safety to his person, and a sum for which we might almost doubt whether he would not have sacrificed as long had he been mistaking means for an end to be hanged himself. Brandon listened to the details of

these confederates, and when they had finished, he addressed them thus:—

“I have heard you, and am convinced you are hars and impostors: there is the money I promised you”—(throwing down a pocket book)—“take it!—and, hark you, if ever you dare whisper—*ay*, but a breath of the atrocious lie you have now forged, be sure I will have you dragged from the recess or nook of infamy in which you may hide your heads, and hanged for the crimes you have already committed. I am not the man to break my word—*begone!*—quit this town instantly: if, in two hours hence, you are found here, your blood be on your own heads!”—*Begone, I say!*”

These words, aided by a countenance well adapted at all times to expressions of a menacing and ruthless character, at once astounded and appalled the accomplices. They left the room in hasty confusion; and Brandon, now alone, walked with uneven steps (the alarming weakness and vacillation of which he did not himself feel) to and fro the apartment. The hell of his breast was stamped upon his features, but he uttered only one thought aloud! “I may,—yes, yes,—I may yet conceal this disgrace to my name!”

His servant tapped at the door to say that the carriage was ready, and that Lord Manbeverer had bid him remind his master that they dined punctually at the hour appointed.

“I am coming!” said Brandon, with a slow and startling emphasis on each word. But he first sat down and wrote a letter to the official quarter, strongly siding the recommendation of the jury; and we may conceive how profitable doing to him to the last, when he signed the authentication for *deeds of transportation for life!* As soon as he had sealed this letter, he summoned an express, gave his orders coolly and distinctly, and attempted, with his usual stateliness of step, to walk

through a long passage which led to dinner-dorm. He found himself told, "Come higher," he said to his servant — "give me your arm!"

All Brandon's domestic staff, save the one left with long-stood to care of him, and it was with some hesitation that his servant ventured to inquire "if his master felt well."

Brandon looked at him, but made no reply; he entered his carriage with slight difficulty, and, telling the coachman to drive as fast as possible, pulled down its general window with him all the blinds of the windows.

Meanwhile, Lord Macleaner, with his friends, was impatiently awaiting the arrival of the seventh guest.

"That august friend arrives!" quoth the bishop of —, with his hands folded across his impetuous stomach. "I fear the further your lordship speaks of may not be the better for the length of the wait."

"Poor fellow!" said the Earl of —, slightly yawning.

"When do you mean?" asked Macleaner, with a smile. "The bishop, the judge, or the squire?"

"Not one of the three, Macleaner — I speak of the prisoner."

"Ah, the fine dog! I forgot him," said Macleaner. "Really, now you mention him, I must confess that he inspires me with great sympathy; but, indeed, it is very wrong in him to keep the judge so long!"

"These hardened wretches have not a great deal to say," mumbled the bishop slowly.

"True!" said Macleaner; "a religious man would have had some words for the state of the church to-morrow."

"It is really true, Macleaner," quoth the Earl of —, "that Brandon is as usual * * * * *"

"So I hear," said Macleaner. "However! how hungry I am!"

A groan from the bishop echoed the complaint.

"I suppose it would be against all common-sense to sit down to dinner without wine?" said Lord —.

"Why, really, I fear so," returned Macleaner. "But our hosts — our hosts is at stake — we will wait five minutes more. By Jove, that's the carriage! I beg your pardon for my headlong rush, my lord bishop."

"I forgive you!" said the good bishop, smiling.

The party then engaged in various conversations at a shelter opening on the ground road, along which the judge's carriage was now seen rapidly approaching; this shelter was but a few yards from the park, and had been partially opened for the better witnessing the approach of the expected guest.

"He keeps the blinds down still! Absence of mind, or shame at his personality — which is the cause, Macleaner?" said one of the party.

"Not shame, I fear!" answered Macleaner. "Even the intensest mortification of depriving our superiors would amount being a shock to the permanent skin of my learned friend."

Here the carriage stopped at the park; the carriage door was opened.

"There seems a strange delay," said Macleaner presently. "Why does not he get out?"

As he spoke, a murmur among the attendants, who appeared somewhat strangely to crowd around the carriage, made the ears of the party.

"What do they say? — What?" said Macleaner, putting his head a-kimber.

The bishop answered hardly; and Macleaner, as he heard the reply, fought for some his sympathy to hold, and hurried out to the carriage-door. His guests followed.

They found Brandon leaning against the farther corner of the carriage — a corpse. His hand held the check, strong as if he had endeavored unsuccessfully but industriously, to pull it. The right side of his face was partially

distorted, as by convulsion or paralysis; but that sufficing so to destroy that remarkable expression of loftiness and severity which had characterised the features in life. At the same time, the distortion which had drawn up on one side the muscles of the mouth, had deepened into a startling broadness the half-smile of derision, that usually lurked around the lower part of his face. Thus unwitnessed and abrupt had been the disunion of the clay and spirit of a man, who, if he passed through life a bold, scheming, stubborn, unwavering hypocrite, was

not without something high even amidst his baseness, his selfishness, and his vices; who seemed less to have loved sin, than by some strange perversion of reason to have disdained virtue, and who, by a solemn and awful suddenness of fate (for who shall venture to indicate the judgment of the arch and unseen Providence even when it appears to mortal eye the least obscured?), won the dreams, the objects, the triumphs of hope, to be blasted by them at the moment of acquisition!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AND LAST.

"—— Subtle,—Surly —Mammon, Del,
Hot Ananias, Dapper, Dragger, all
With whom I traded"—*The Alchemist.*

As when some rural citizen—retired for a fleeting holiday, far from the cares of the world, "*strepitumque Romæ*,"* to the sweet shades of Ponthieu, or the remoter plains of Champaign—conducts some delighted visitor over the intricacies of that Italian masterpiece which he is pleased to call his labyrinth or maze,—now smiling facetiously at his guest's perplexity,—now listening with calm expectancy to his futile and erring conjectures,—now mechanically accompanying him through a dithering path, in which the baffled adventurer is suddenly checked by the blank features of a thoroughfareless hedge,—now trembling as he sees the guest stumbling unawares into the right track, and now relieved, as he beholds him, after a pause of deliberation, wind into the wrong,—even so, O

pleasant reader! doth the sage novelist conduct thee through the labyrinth of his tale, amusing himself with thy self-deceits, and spinning forth, in poetical pleasure, the quiet yarn of his entertainment from the involutions which occasion thy fretting eagerness and perplexity. But as when,—thanks to the host's good nature or fatigue!—the mystery is once unravelled, and the guest permitted to penetrate even unto the concealed end of the leafy maze, the honest est, satisfied with the pleasant pains he has already bestowed upon his visitor puts him not to the labour of retracing the steps he hath so erratically trod, but leads him in three strokes, and through a simpler path, at once to the mouth of the maze, and dis-anneth him elsewhere for entertainment; even so will the prudent narrator, when the intricacies of his plot are once unfolded, occasion no

* "*And the roar of Rome.*"

stale and profitless delays to his wearied reader, but conduct him, with as much brevity as convenient, without the labyrinth which has ceased to retain the interest of a secret.

We shall, therefore, in pursuance of the city's policy, relate, as rapidly as possible, that part of our narrative which yet remains untold. On Brandon's person was found the paper which had contained so fatal an intelligence of his son; and when brought to Lord Mauleverer, the words struck that person (who knew Brandon had been in search of his lost son, whom we have seen that he had been taught however to suppose illegitimate, though it is probable that many doubts, whether he had not been deceived, must have occurred to his natural sagacity,) as sufficiently important to be worth an inquiry after the writer. Dummie was easily found, for he had not yet turned his back on the town when the news of the judge's sudden death was brought back to it; and, taking advantage of that circumstance, the friendly Dunnaker remained altogether in the town (albeit his long companion deserted it as hastily as might be), and whiled the time by presenting himself at the gaol, and, after some ineffectual efforts, winning his way to Clifford: easily tracked by the name he had given to the governor of the gaol, he was conducted the same day to Lord Mauleverer, and his narrative, confused as it was, and proceeding even from so suspicious a quarter, thrilled those digestive organs, which in Mauleverer stood proxy for a heart, with feelings as much resembling awe and horror as our good peer was capable of experiencing. Already shocked from his worldly philosophy of indifference by the death of Brandon, he was more susceptible to a remorseful and salutary impression at this moment than he might have been at any other: and he could not, without some

twinges of conscience, think of the ruin he had brought on the mother of the being he had but just prosecuted to the death. He dismissed Dummie, and, after a little consideration, he ordered his carriage, and, leaving the funeral preparations for his friend to the care of his man of business, he set off for London, and the house, in particular, of the Secretary of the Home Department. We would not willingly wrong the noble penitent; but we venture a suspicion that he might not have preferred a personal application for mercy to the prisoner to a written one, had he not felt certain unpleasant qualms in remaining in a country house, overshadowed by ceremonies as gloomy as those of death. The letter of Brandon, and the application of Mauleverer, obtained for Clifford a relaxation of his sentence. He was left for perpetual transportation. A ship was already about to sail, and Mauleverer, content with having saved his life, was by no means anxious that his departure from the country should be saddled with any superfluous delay.

Meanwhile, the first rumour that reached London respecting Brandon's fate was, that he had been found in a fit, and was lying dangerously ill at Mauleverer's; and before the second and more fatally sure report arrived, Lucy had gathered from the visible dismay of Barlow, whom she anxiously cross-questioned, and who, really loving his master, was easily affected into communication, the first and more flattering intelligence. To Barlow's secret delight, she insisted instantly on setting off to the supposed sick man; and, accompanied by Barlow and her woman, the affectionate girl hastened to Mauleverer's house on the evening after the day the earl left it. Lucy had not proceeded far before Barlow learned, from the gossip of the road, the real state of the case. Indeed, it was at the first stage that,

with a sorrowful countenance, he approached the door of the carriage, and commencing the duties of post-driving for her, begged of Lucy to turn back. So soon as Miss Brandon had overcome the first shock which this intel-
ligence gave her, she said, with emphasis, "Well, Barrow, if it be so, we have still a duty to perform. Tell the postman to drive on!"

"Indeed, madam, I cannot see what use it can be to hurry yourself, — and put us poorly. If you will let me go, I will see every attention paid to the remains of my poor master."

"When my father lay dead," said Lucy, with a grave and sad sternness in her manner. "The who is now no more, sent me proxy to perform the last duties of a brother; neither will I send one to discharge those of a niece, and prove that I have forgotten the gratitude of a daughter. Drive on!"

We have said that there were times when a spell was stricken from Lucy's little command to her in general, and now the command of her uncle sat upon her brow. On sped the horses, and for several minutes Lucy remained silent. Her woman did not dare to speak. At length Miss Brandon turned, and, covering her face with her hands, burst into tears so violent that they alarmed her attendant even more than her previous stillness. "My poor, poor uncle!" she sobbed, and these were all her words.

We must pass over Lucy's arrival at Lord Malbourne's house, — we must pass over the weary days which elapsed till that moment when her body was engaged to dust with which, could it have put retained one spark of its laughing spirit, it would have refused to stand in arms. She had loved the deceased humbly and beyond his merits, and, repelling all considerations to the contrary, and all the force of religious restraint, she witnessed himself the dreary ceremony which bequeathed

the human remains of William Brandon to repose and to the worm. On that same day Clifford received the mitigation of his sentence, and on that day another trial awaited Lucy. We think briefly to convey to the reader what that scene was; we need only observe, that Dummie Dunnaker, deposed by his great love for little Paul, whom he delightedly said he found not the least "stuck up by his great fame and holowation," still lingered in the town, and was not only aware of the relationship of the cousins, but had gleaned from Long Ned, as they journeyed down to "****", the affliction entertained by Clifford for Lucy. Of the manner in which the communication reached Lucy, we need not speak; suffice it to say, that on the day in which she had performed the last duty to her uncle, she learned, for the first time, her lover's situation.

On that evening, in the convict's cell, the cousins met. Their conference was low, for the guard stood within hearing, and it was broken by Lucy's convulsive sobs. But the voice of one, whose iron nerves were not unworthy of the offspring of William Brandon, was clear and audible to her ear, even though uttered in a whisper that scarcely stirred his lip. It seemed as if Lucy, smitten to the inmost heart by the generosity with which her lover had torn himself from her, at the time that her woe might have raised him, in any other country, far above the perils and the crimes of his career in this, — perceiving now, for the first time, and in all their force, the causes of his mysterious conduct, melted by their relationship, and forgetting herself utterly in the delicate and dark situation in which she beheld one who, whatever his crimes, had not been seduced towards her — it seemed as if, carried away by those emotions, she had yielded altogether to the fondness and devotion

of her mother, that she had wished to leave home and friends, and for-
tune, and share with him his punish-
ment and his shame.

"Why!" she faltered; "why—why
not? we are all that is left to each
other in the world! Your father
and mine were brothers, let me be
to you as a sister. What is there
left for me here? Not one being
whom I love, or who cares for me—
not one!"

It was then that Clifford summoned
all his courage, as he answered:—per-
haps, now that he felt—(though here
his knowledge was necessarily con-
fused and imperfect)—his birth was
not unequal to hers—now that he
read, or believed he read, in her wan
cheek and attenuated frame, that de-
sertion to her was death, and that ge-
nerosity and self-sacrifice had become
too late, perhaps, these thoughts
concurring with a love in himself be-
yond all words, and a love in her which
it was above humanity to resist, alto-
gether conquered and subdued him.
Yet, as we have said, his voice
breathed calmly in her ear, and his
eye only, which brightened with a
steady and resolute hope, betrayed his
mind. "Live, then!" said he, as he
concluded. "My sister, my mistress,
my bride, live! In one year from
this day I repeat . . . I
promise it thee!"

The interview was over, and Lucy
returned home with a firm step. She
was on foot; the rain fell in torrents;
yet, even in her precarious state, her
health suffered not; and when within
a week from that time she read that
Clifford had departed to the bourne
of his punishment, she read the news
with a steady eye and a lip that, if it
grew paler, did not quiver.

Shortly after that time, Miss Bran-
don departed to an obscure town by
the sea-side; and there, refusing all
ociety, she continued to reside. As
the birth of Clifford was known but to

few, and his legitimacy was unsus-
pected by all except, perhaps, by
Mauleverer, Lucy succeeded to the
great wealth of her uncle, and this
circumstance made her more than
ever an object of attraction in the eyes
of her noble adorer. Finding himself
unable to see her, he wrote to her
more than one moving epistle; but
as Lucy continued inflexible, he at
length, disgusted by her want of taste,
ceased his pursuit, and resigned him-
self to the continued sterility of un-
wedded life. As the months waned,
Miss Brandon seemed to grow weary
of her retreat, and immediately on
attaining her majority, which she did
about eight months after Brandon's
death, she transferred the bulk of her
wealth to France, where it was under-
stood (for it was impossible that rumour
should sleep upon an heiress and a
beauty) that she intended in future
to reside. Even Warlock (that spell to
the proud heart of her uncle) she
ceased to retain. It was offered to
the nearest relation of the family at
a sum which he did not hesitate to
close with. And, by the common
vicissitudes of Fortune, the estate
of the ancient Brandons has now,
we perceive by a weekly journal, just
passed into the hands of a wealthy
alderman.

It was nearly a year since Brandon's
death, when a letter, bearing a foreign
post-mark, came to Lucy. From that
time, her spirits—which before, though
subject to fits of abstraction, had been
even, and subdued, not sad—rose into
all the cheerfulness and vivacity of
her earliest youth; she busied herself
actively in preparations for her depar-
ture from this country; and, at length,
the day was fixed, and the vessel was
engaged. Every day till that one,
did Lucy walk to the sea-side, and,
ascending the highest cliff, spend
hours, till the evening closed, in
watching, with seemingly idle gaze,
the vessels that interspersed the sea;

and with every day her health seemed to strengthen, and the soft and luscious colour she had once worn, to rebloom upon her cheek.

Previous to her departure, Miss Brandon dismissed her servants, and only engaged one female, a foreigner, to accompany her—a certain tone of quiet command, formerly unknown to her, characterised these measures, so strikingly independent for one of her sex and age. The day arrived—it was the anniversary of her last interview with Clifford. On entering the vessel, it was observed that she trembled violently, and that her face was as pale as death. A stranger, who had stood aloof wrapped in his cloak, darted forward to assist her—that was the last which her discarded and weeping servants beheld of her from the pier where they stood to gaze.

Nothing more, in this country, was ever known of the fate of Lucy Brandon; and as her circle of acquaintances was narrow, and interest in her fate existed vividly in none, save a few humble breasts, conjecture was never keenly awakened, and soon cooled into forgetfulness. If it favoured, after the lapse of years, any one notion more than another, it was that she had perished among the victims of the French Revolution.

Meanwhile, let us glance over the destinies of our more subordinate acquaintances.

Augustus Tomlinson, on parting from Long Ned, had succeeded in reaching Calais, and, after a rapid tour through the Continent, he ultimately betook himself to a certain literary city in Germany, where he became distinguished for his metaphysical acumen and opened a school of morals on the Grecian model taught in the French tongue. He managed, by the patronage he received, and the pupils he enlightened, to obtain a very decent income; and as he wrote

a folio against Locke, proved that men had innate feelings, and affirmed that we should refer every thing not to reason, but to the sentiments of the soul, he became greatly respected for his extraordinary virtue. Some little discoveries were made after his death, which, perhaps, would have somewhat diminished the general odour of his sanctity, had not the admirers of his school carefully hushed up the matter, probably out of respect for "the sentiments of the soul."

Pepper, whom the police did not so anxiously desire to destroy as they did his two companions, might have managed, perhaps many years longer, to graze upon the public commons, had not a letter, written somewhat imprudently, fallen into wrong hands. This, though after creating a certain stir it apparently died away, lived in the memory of the police, and finally conspired, with various peccadilloes, to produce his downfall. He was seized, tried, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. He so advantageously employed his time at Botany Bay, and arranged things there so comfortably to himself, that, at the expiration of his sentence, he refused to return home. He made an excellent match, built himself an excellent house, and remained in "the land of the blest" to the end of his days, noted to the last for the redundancy of his hair, and a certain ferocious coxcombry of aspect.

As for fighting Attie and Gentleman George, for Scarlet Jean and for Old Bags, we confess ourselves destitute of any certain information of their latter ends. We can only add, with regard to fighting Attie,—"Good luck be with him wherever he goes!" And for mine host of the "Jolly Angler," that, though we have not the physical constitution to quaff "a bumper of blue ruin," we shall be very happy, over any tolerable wine, and in company with any agreeable

convivialists, to bear our part in the polished chorus of—

"Here 's to Gentleman George, God bless him!"

Mrs. Lobkins departed this life like a lamb: and Dummie Dunnaker obtained a license to carry on the business at Thames Court. He boasted, to the last, of his acquaintance with the great Captain Lovett, and of the affability with which that distinguished personage treated him. Stories he had, too, about Judge Brandon, but no one believed a syllable of them; and Dummie, indignant at the disbelief, increased, out of vehemence, the marvel of the stories: so that, at length, what was added almost swallowed up what was original, and Dummie himself might have been puzzled to satisfy his own conscience as to what was false and what was true.

The erudite Peter Mac Grawler, returning to Scotland, disappeared by the road: a person, singularly resembling the sage, was afterwards seen at Carlisle, where he discharged the useful and praiseworthy duties of Jack Ketch. But whether or not this respectable functionary *was* our identical Simon Pure, *our* ex-editor of "The Asinæum," we will not take it upon ourselves to assert.

Lord Mauleverer, finally resolving on a single life, passed the remainder of his years in indolent tranquillity. When he died, the newspapers asserted that his Majesty was deeply affected by the loss of so old and valued a friend. His furniture and wines sold remarkably high: and a Great Man, his particular intimate, who purchased his books, started to find, by pencil marks, that the noble deceased had read some of them, exclaimed, not altogether without truth,—“Ah! Mauleverer might have been a deuced clever fellow,—if he had liked it!”

The earl was accustomed to show as a curiosity a ring of great value, which

he had received in rather a singular manner. One morning, a packet was brought him which he found to contain a sum of money, the ring mentioned, and a letter from the notorious Lovett, in which that person, in begging to return his lordship the sums of which he had *twice* assisted to rob him, thanked him, with earnest warmth, for the consideration testified towards him in not revealing his identity with Captain Clifford; and ventured, as a slight testimony of respect, to enclose the aforesaid ring with the sum returned.

About the time Mauleverer received this curious packet, several anecdotes of a similar nature appeared in the public journals; and it seemed that Lovett had acted upon a general principle of restitution,—not always, it must be allowed, the offspring of a robber's repentance. While the idle were marvelling at these anecdotes, came the tardy news, that Lovett, after a single month's sojourn at his place of condemnation, had, in the most daring and singular manner, effected his escape. Whether, in his progress up the country, he had been starved, or slain by the natives,—or whether, more fortunate, he had ultimately found the means of crossing the seas, was as yet unknown. There ended the adventures of the gallant robber; and thus, by a strange coincidence, the same mystery which wrapped the fate of Lucy involved also that of her lover. And here, kind reader, might we drop the curtain on our closing scene, did we not think it might please thee to hold it up yet one moment, and give thee another view of the world behind.

In a certain town of that Great Country, where shoes are imperfectly polished,* and opinions are not prosecuted, there resided, twenty years after the date of Lucy Brandon's

* See Captain Hall's late work on America

departure from England, a man held in high and universal respect, not only for the rectitude of his conduct, but for the energies of his mind, and the purposes to which they were directed. If you asked who cultivated that waste, the answer was—"Clifford!" Who procured the establishment of that hospital?—"Clifford!" Who obtained the redress of such a public grievance?—"Clifford!" Who struggled for and won such a popular benefit?—"Clifford!" In the gentler part of his projects and his undertakings,—in that part, above all, which concerned the sick or the necessitous, this useful citizen was seconded, or rather exalted, by a being over whose surpassing loveliness Time seemed to have flown with a gentle and cherishing wing. There was something remarkable and touching in the love which this couple for the woman we refer to was Clifford's wife bore to each other. Like the plant on the plains of Hebron, the time which brought to that love an additional strength, brought to it also a softer and a fresher verdure. Although their present neighbours were unacquainted with the events of their earlier life, previous to their settlement at ****, it was known that they had been wealthy at the time they first came to reside there, and that, by a series of fatalities, they had lost all; but Clifford had borne up manfully against fortune, and in a new country, where men who prefer labour to dependence cannot easily starve, he had been enabled to toil upward through the severe stages of poverty and hardship, with an honesty and vigour of character which won him, perhaps, a more hearty esteem for every successive effort, than the display of his last riches might ever have acquired him. His labours and his abstinence, a slow gradual but sure ascent, and he now enjoyed the blessings of a competence earned with the most scrupulous in-

grity, and spent with the most kindly benevolence. A trace of the trials they had passed through was discernible in each; those trials had stolen the rose from the wife's cheek, and had sown untimely wrinkles in the broad brow of Clifford. There were moments too, but they were only moments, when the latter sank from his wonted elastic and healthful cheerfulness of mind, into a gloomy and abstracted reverie; but these moments the wife watched with a jealous and fond anxiety, and one sound of her sweet voice had the power to dispel their influence; and when Clifford raised his eyes, and glanced from her tender smile around his happy home and his growing children, or beheld through the very windows of his room the public benefits he had created, something of pride and gladness glowed on his countenance, and he said, though with glistening eyes and subdued voice, as his looks returned once more to his wife,—“I owe these to thee!”

One trait of mind especially characterised Clifford,—indulgence to the faults of others! “Circumstances make guilt,” he was wont to say: “let us endeavour to correct the circumstances, before we rail against the guilt!” His children promised to tread in the same useful and honourable path that he trod himself. Happy was considered that family which had the hope to ally itself with his.

Such was the after fate of Clifford and Lucy. Who will condemn us for preferring the moral of that fate to the moral which is extorted from the gibbet and the hulks?—which makes sorrowful, not benignant; terrifies our weakness, not warns our reason. Who does not allow that it is better to repair than to perish;—better, too, to atone as the citizen than to repent as the hermit! O John Wilkes! Aftersman of London, and Drawcansir of Liberty, your life was not an idle

too perfect,—your patriotism might have been infinitely purer,—your morals would have admitted indefinite amendment: you are no great favourite with us or with the rest of the world; but you said one excellent thing, for which we look on you with benevolence, nay, almost with respect. We scarcely know whether to smile at its wit, or to sigh at its wisdom. Mark this truth, all ye gentlemen of England, who would make laws as the Romans made *fusces*—a bundle of rods with an axe in the middle; mark it, and remember! long may it live, allied with hope in ourselves, but with gratitude in our children;—long after the book which it now “adorns” and “points” has gone to its dusty slumber;—long, long after the feverish hand which now writes it down can defend or enforce it no more:—“THIS VERY WORST USE TO WHICH YOU CAN PUT A MAN IS TO HANG HIM!”

NOTE.

(Page 281.)

In the second edition of this novel there were here inserted two "characters" of "Fighting Attie" and "Gentleman George," omitted in the subsequent edition published by Mr. Bentley in the *Standard Novels*. At the request of some admirers of those eminent personages, who considered the biographical sketches referred to impartial in themselves, and contributing to the completeness of the design for which men so illustrious were introduced, they are here retained,—though in the more honourable form of a separate and supplementary notice.

FIGHTING ATTIE.

When he dies, the road will have lost a great man, whose foot was rarely out of his stirrup, and whose clear head guided a bold hand. He carried common sense to its perfection—and he made the straight path the outward. His words were few, his actions were many. He was the Spartan of Tobymen, and Lachish was the short soul of his professional legislation!

Whatever way you view him, you see those properties of mind which command fortune; few thoughts not confusing each other, simple elements, and bold. His character in action may be summed in two phrases: "A fast sword and a stroke made." Had his intellect been more luxurious, his resolution might have been less hardy—and his hardness made his greatness. He was one of those who shine best in action—chimeras (to adapt the simile of Sir Thomas More) that seem useless till you fight your foes. So in calm moments you dreamed not of his deeds, and only on the road you were struck dumb with the outbursting of his genius. Whatever situation he was called to, you found in him what you looked for in vain in others; for his strong sense gave to Attie what long experience taught, but often fails, to give to its pursuers; his energy triumphed over the same of novel circum-

stance, and he broke in a moment through the cobweb, which entangled lesser natures for years. His eye saw a final result, and disregarded the detail. He robbed his man without chicanery; and took his purse by applying for it, rather than scheming. If his enemies wish to detract from his merit,—a merit great, dazzling, and yet solid,—they may, perhaps, say that his genius fitted him better to continue exploits than to devise them; and thus that, besides the renown which he may justly claim, he often wholly engrossed that fame which should have been shared by others; he took up the enterprise where it ceased at Labour, and carried it onwards, where it was rewarded with Glory. Even this charge proves a new merit of address, and lessens not the merit less complicated we have allowed him before. The fame he has acquired may excite our emulation; the envy he has not appeared may console us for obscurity.

— *Αἰεὶ δ' ἀέθλη-
τον ἔσται ἀμείνων
ἀσκήσαντα πεισόμεναι.
Τὸν δ' ἀνὰ πᾶσι κίχιοι
ὦ οἱ σὺν, καὶ ἰσχύει
τῷ δέσποτι ἀνδρὶ γενναίῳ.
Πρὸς Οὐρανὸν ἔλ. ἰ. α. α.*

GENTLEMAN GEORGE.

For thee, Gentleman George, for thee, what conclusive validation remains? Alas! since we began the strange and misty scene wherein first thou wast introduced, the grim foe hath knocked thrice at thy gates; and now, as we write, thou art departed thence—thou art no more! a new Lord presides in thine easy chair, a new voice

* Thus, not too vigorously, translated by Mr. West—

"But wrong in error is the human mind,
And human life is ever to sorrow;
How, as what fortune shall originate to blind?
How, as how long the present shall endure?"

rings from thy merry board: thou art forgotten! thou art already like these pages, a tale that is told to a memory that retaineth not! Where are thy quips and cranks? where thy stately excoimberies and thy regal gauds? Thine house, and thy pageola, thy Gothic chimney, and thy Chinese sign post; these yet ask the concluding hand: thy hand is cold; their completion, and the enjoyment the completion yields, are for another! Thou sowest, and thy follower reaps; thou buidest, thy successor holds; thou plantest, and thine heir sits beneath the shadow of thy trees;—

"Neque haram, quae colla, arborum
Te, praefer insanae cupressus,
Ulla brevem dominum sequetur!" •

At this moment, thy life—for thou wert a Great Man to thine order, and they have added thy biography to that of Abershaw and Shippard—thy life is before us! What a humbly in its events! Gaily didst thou laugh into thy youth, and run through the courses of thy manhood. Wit sat at thy table, and Genius was thy comrade; Beauty was thy handmaid, and Frivolity played around thee,—a buffoon that thou didst ridicule, and ridiculing enjoy! Who among us can look back to thy brilliant era, and not sigh to think that the wonderful men who surrounded thee, and amidst whom thou wert a centre, and a nucleus, are for him but the things of history, and the phantoms of a bodiless tradition? Those brilliant suppers, glittering with beauty, the memory of which makes one spot yet inherited by Rochester Hall a haunted and a fairy ground; all who gathered to that Armida's circle, the Gracemonts, and the Beauvilliers, and the Rochefoucaults of England and the Road,—who does not feel that to have seen these, though but as Gil Blas saw the festivities of his actors, from the sideboard and behind the chair, would have been a triumph for the earthlier feelings of his old age to recall? What, then, must it have been to have seen them as thou didst see,—(thou, the deceased and the forgotten!)—see them from the height of thy youth, and power, and rank (for early wert thou keeper to a public), and reckless spirits, and lusty capacities of joy? What pleasures where sense lavished its uncounted varieties? What revellings where wine was the least excitement?

Let the scene shift.—How stirring is the change! Triumph, and glitter, and conquest! For thy public was a public of

renown: thither came the Warriors of the Ring—the Heroes of the Cross—and thou, their patron, wert elevated on their fame: *Principes pro victoris pugnant—comites pro principe.* • What visions sweep across us! What glories didst thou witness! Over what conquests didst thou preside! The mightiest epoch—the most wonderful events which the world, thy world, ever knew—of these was it not indeed, and dazzlingly thine,

"To share the triumph and partake the gale?"

Let the scene shift.—Manhood is touched by Age; but Lust is "heeled" by Luxury, and Pomp is the heir of Pleasure; gewgaws and gaud, instead of glory, surround, rejoice, and flatter thee to the last. There rise thy buildings—there lie, secret but gorgeous, the tabernacles of thine ease; and the earnings of thy friends, and the riches of the people whom they plunder, are waters to thine imperial whirlpool. Thou art lapped in ease as is a silkworm; and profusion flows from thy high and unseen asylum as the rain poureth from a cloud. Much didst thou do to beautify chimney tops—much to adorn the snuggeries where thou didst dwell:—thieving with thee took a substantial shape, and the robberies of the public passed into a metempsychosis of mortar, and became public-houses. So there and thus, building and planning, didst thou spin out thy latter yarn, till Death came upon thee; and when we looked around, lo! thy brother was on thy hearth. And thy paradise, and thy comrades, and thine ancient pals, and thy partly biowens, they made a murmur, and they packed up their goods—but they turned ere they departed, and they would have worshipped thy brother as they worshipped thee;—but he would not! And thy sign post is gone and mouldered already; and to the "Jolly Angler" has succeeded the "Jolly Tar!" And thy picture is disappearing fast from the print-shops, and thy name from the mouths of men! And thy brother, whom no one praised while thou didst live, is on a steeple of panegyric built above the churchyard that contains thy grave. Oh! shifting and volatile hearts of men! Who would be keeper of a Public? Who dispense the wine and the juices that gladden when, the moment the pulse of the hand ceases, the wine and the juices are forgotten?

To History—for thy name will be preserved in that record, which, whether it be the Calendar of Newgate or of Nations, telleth

• Nor will any of these trees thou didst cultivate follow thee, the short-lived lord,—save the hateful Cypress.

• Chiefs for the victory fight—for chiefs the soldiers.

as alike how men suffer, and sin, and perish — to history we leave the sins and misdeeds of the nation and its faults. The sins that were in him were those of the man to whom pleasures are all in all. Thou wert, from root to branch, sap and in heart, what moralists term the libertine, honest the light wooing the quick desertion, the broken faith, the organical purity that manifested thy bearing to those peculiar creatures who called thee — ‘Gentleman George.’ Never, to one solitary woman, until the last dull flame of thy disgrace, didst thou so behave as to give no foundation to complaint, and no voice to wrong. But who shall say be honest to one, but laugh at perfidy to another? Who shall wholly confine treachery to one sex, if to that sex be told treachery no offence? So in thee as in all thy tribe, there was a laxness of principle, an insincerity of faith, even to men — thy friends, when occasion called, thou couldst forsake, and thy luxuries were dearer to thee than justice to those who supplied them. Men who love and die for pleasure as thou are usually good-natured; for their devotion to pleasure arises from the strength of their constitution, and the strength of their constitution preserves them from the irritations of weaker nerves, so wert thou good-natured, and often generous; and often with thy generosity didst thou unite a delicacy that showed thou hadst an original and a tender sympathy with men. But as those who pursue pleasure are above all others impatient of interruption, so to such as interfered with thy mean pursuit, thou didst testify a deep, a lasting, and a revengeful anger. Yet let not such views of temperament be too severely judged! For so thee were given man’s two most persuasive tempters, physical and moral — Health and Power! Thy talents, such as they were — and they were the talents of a man of the world — mistled rather than guided thee, for they gave thy mind that demi-philosophy, that indifference to excited motives which is generally found in a clever rake. Thy education was wretched; thou hadst a smattering of Horace, but thou couldst not write English,

and thy letters betray that thou wert woefully ignorant of logic. The fineness of thy taste has been exaggerated; thou wert unacquainted with the nakedness of simplicity; thy idea of a whole was grotesque and overloaded, and thy fancy in details was gaudy and meretricious. But thou hadst thy hand constantly in the public purse, and thou hadst plans and advisers far ever before thee; more than all, thou didst find the houses in that neighbourhood wherein thou didst build, so preternaturally hideous, that thou didst require but little science to be less frightful in thy creations. If thou didst not improve thy native village and thy various houses with a solid, a lofty, and a noble taste, thou didst nevertheless very singularly improve. And thy posterity, in avoiding the faults of thy masonry, will be grateful for the effects of thy ambition. The same demi-philosophy, which influenced thee in private life, exercised a far benigner and happier power over thee in public. Thou wert not idly vexations in vestries, nor ordinarily tyrannic in thy parish; if thou wert ever arbitrary, it was only when thy pleasure was checked, or thy vanity wounded. At other times, thou didst leave events to their legitimate course, so that in thy latter years thou wert justly popular in thy parish, and in thy grave, thy great good fortune will outshine thy few bad qualities, and men will say of thee with a kindly, nor an erring judgment, — ‘In private life he was not worse than the Rufflers who came to this bar; in public life he was better than those who kept a public before him.’ — Hark! those buzzes! what is the burthen of that chorus? — Oh, grateful and never time-serving Britons, have ye manifested already for another the song ye made so wisely in honour of Gentleman George; and must we, lest we lose the custom of the public, and the good things of the taproom, must we roar with throats yet hoarse with our fervour for the old words, our ardour for the new?

“Here’s to *Marston Biff*, God bless him!
 God bless him!
 God bless him!
 Here’s to *Marston Biff*, God bless him!

TOMLINSONIANA;

OR,

THE POSTHUMOUS WRITINGS

OF THE CELEBRATED

AUGUSTUS TOMLINSON,

PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF —

ADDRESSED TO HIS PUPILS

AND COMPRISING

I.

ESSAYS ON THE POPULAR ART OF CHEATING, ILLUSTRATED BY THE CHARACTERS BEING
AN INTRODUCTION TO THAT NOBLE SCIENCE, BY WHICH EVERY
MAN MAY BECOME HIS OWN ROGER.

II.

CRASHMINGTON: OR DEBATA, CRITICAL, SENTIMENTAL, MORAL, AND CRIMINAL.

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING lately been travelling in Germany, I spent some time at that University in which Augustus Tomlinson presided as Professor of Moral Philosophy. I found that that great man died, after a lingering illness, in the beginning of the year 1822, perfectly resigned to his fate, and conversing, even on his death-bed, on the divine mysteries of Ethical Philosophy. Notwithstanding the little peccadilloes, to which I have alluded in the latter pages of *Paul Clifford*, and which his pupils deemed it advisable to hide from

“ The gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day,”

his memory was still held in a tender veneration. Perhaps, as in the case of the illustrious Burns, the faults of a great man endear to you his genius. In his latter days the Professor was accustomed to wear a light-green silk dressing-gown, and, as he was perfectly bald, a little black velvet cap; his small-clothes were pepper and salt. These interesting facts I learned from one of his pupils. His old age was consumed in lectures, in conversation, and in the composition of the little *morceaux* of wisdom we present to the public. In these essays and maxims, short as they are, he seems to have concentrated the wisdom of his industrious and honourable life. With great difficulty I procured from his executors the MSS. which were then preparing for the German press. A valuable consideration induced these gentlemen to become philanthropic, and to consider the inestimable blessings they would confer upon this country by suffering me to give the following essays to the light, in their native and English dress, on the same day whereon they appear in Germany in the garb of foreign disguise.

At an age when, while Hypocrisy stalks, simpers, sidles, struts, and hobbles through the country, Truth also begins to watch her adversary

INTRODUCTION.

in every movement, I cannot but think these lessons of Augustus Tomlinson peculiarly well-timed. I add them as a fitting Appendix to a Novel that may not inappropriately be termed a Treatise on Social Frauds, and if they contain within them that evidence of diligent attention and that principle of good, in which the satire of Vice is only the germ of its detection, they may not, perchance, pass wholly unnoticed; nor be even condemned to that hasty reading in which the Indifference of to-day is but the prelude to the Forgetfulness of to-morrow.

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MAXIMS

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THE POPULAR ART OF CHEATING.

ILLUSTRATED BY TEN CHARACTERS ;

BEING AN INTRODUCTION TO THAT VARIOUS SCIENCE, BY WHICH EVERY MAN
MAY ACQUIRE HIS OWN AMBITION.

" Set a thief to catch a thief."—*Proverb.*

I.

WHenever you are about to utter something astonishingly false, always begin with, "It is an acknowledged fact," &c. Sir Robert Filmer was a master of this method of writing. Think with what a solemn face that great man attempted to cheat! "*It is a truth undeniable that there cannot be any multitude of men whatsoever, either great or small, &c.—but that in the same multitude there is one man amongst them that in nature hath a right to be King of all the rest—as being the next heir to Adam!*"

II.

When you want something from the public, throw the blame of the asking on the most sacred principle you can find. A common beggar can read you exquisite lessons on this the most important maxim in the art of popular cheating. "*For the love of God, sir, a penny!*"

III.

Whenever on any matter, moral, sentimental, or political, you find

yourself utterly ignorant, talk immediately of "*The Laws of Nature.*" As those laws are written nowhere, they are known by nobody. Should any ask you *how* you happen to know such or such a doctrine as the dictate of Nature, clap your hand to your heart and say, "*Here!*"

IV.

Yield to a man's tastes, and he will yield to your interests.

V.

When you talk to the half-wise, twaddle; when you talk to the ignorant, brag; when you talk to the sagacious, look very humble, and ask their opinion.

VI.

Always bear in mind, my beloved people, that the means of livelihood depend not on the virtues, but the vices of others. The lawyer, the statesman, the hangman, the physician, are paid by our sins; nay, even the commoner professions, the tailor,

• Locke.

the coachmaker, the upholsterer, the wine merchant, draw their fortunes, if not their existence, from those smaller vices—our foibles. Vanity is the figure prefixed to the ciphers of Necessity. Wherefore, O, my beloved pupils: never mind what a man's virtues are; waste no time in learning them. Fasten at once on his infirmities. Do to the One as, were you an honest man, you would do to the Many. This is the way to be a rogue individually, as a lawyer is a rogue professionally. Knaves are like critics* —“flies that feed on the sore part, and would have nothing to live on were the body in health.”†

VII.

Every man finds it desirable to have tears in his eyes at times—one has a sympathy with humid lids. Providence hath beneficently provided for this want, and given to every man, in its divine forethought, misfortunes painful to recall. Hence, probably, those human calamities which the atheist rails against! Wherefore, when you are uttering some affecting sentiment to your intended dupe, think of the greatest misfortune you ever had in your life; habit will soon make the association of tears and that melancholy remembrance constantly felicitous. I knew, my dear pupils, a most intelligent Frenchman, who obtained a charming legacy from an old poet by repeating the bard's verses with streaming eyes. “How were you able to weep at will?” asked I (I was young then, my pupils). “*Je pensois*,” answered he, “*à mon pauvre père qui est mort*.”‡ The union of sentiment with the ability of swindling made that Frenchman a most fascinating creature!

* Nullum simile est quod idem.—Editor.

† Tatler.

‡ I used to think of my poor father who is dead.

VIII.

Never commit the error of the over-shrewd, and deem human nature worse than it is. Human Nature is so damnable good, that if it were not for human Art we knaves could not live. The primary elements of a man's mind do not sustain us—it is what he owes to “the pains taken with his education,” and “the blessings of civilised society!”

IX.

Whenever you doubt, my pupils, whether your man be a quack or not, decide the point by seeing if your man be a positive asserter. Nothing indicates imposture like confidence. Volney* saith well, “that the most celebrated of charlatans† and the boldest of tyrants begins his extraordinary tissue of lies by these words, ‘There is no doubt in this book!’”

X.

There is one way of cheating people peculiar to the British Isles, and which, my pupils, I earnestly recommend you to import hither—cheating by subscription. People like to be plundered in company; dupery then grows into the spirit of party. Thus one quack very gravely requested persons to fit up a ship for him and send him round the world as its captain to make discoveries, and another patriotically suggested that 10,000, should be subscribed—for what?—to place him in Parliament! Neither of these fellows could have screwed an individual out of a shilling had he asked him for it in a corner; but a printed list, “with His Royal Highness” at the top, plays the devil with English guineas. A subscription for individuals may be considered a society for the ostentatious encouragement of idleness, impudence, beggary, imposture,—and other public virtues!

* Lectures on History.

† Mahomet

XI.

Whenever you read the life of a great man, I mean a man eminently successful, you will perceive all the qualities given to him are the qualities necessary even to a mediocre rogue. "He possessed," saith the biographer, "the greatest address (*viz.* the faculty of wheedling); the most admirable courage (*viz.* the faculty of bullying); the most noble fortitude (*viz.* the faculty of bearing to be belied); the most singular versatility (*viz.* the faculty of saying one thing to one man, and its reverse to another); and the most wonderful command over the mind of his contemporaries (*viz.* the faculty of victimising their purses or seducing their actions)." *Whence, if back not you in hurtable life, assiduously study the biographies of the great, in order to accomplish you as a rogue; if in the more elevated range of society, be thoroughly versed in the lives of the rascal. — so shall you fit yourself to be eminent!*

XII.

The hypocrisy of virtue, my beloved people, is a little out of fashion nowadays. It is sometimes better to affect the hypocrisy of vice. Appear generously prodigal, and swear with a hearty face that you do not pretend to be better than the generosity of your neighbours. Sincerity is not less a covering than lying; a frieze great cost wraps you as well as a Spanish cloak.

XIII.

When you are about to execute some great plan, and to defraud a number of persons, let the first one or two of the affected number be the cleverest, shrewdest fellows you can find. You have then a reference that will alone dupe the rest of the world. "That Mr. Lynt is sanctified," will amply suffice to satisfy Mr. Moie of the honesty of your intentions! Nor

are shrewd men the hardest to take in; they rely on their strength; invulnerable heroes are necessarily the bravest. Talk to them in a business-like manner, and refer your design at once to their lawyer. My friend, John Shamberry, was a model in this grand stroke of art. He swindled twelve people to the tune of some thousands, with no other trouble than it first cost him to swindle — whom do you think! the Secretary to the Society for the Suppression of Swindling!

XIV.

Divide your arts into two classes: those which cost you little labour — those which cost much. The first, — flattery, attention, answering letters by return of post, walking across a street to oblige the man you intend to ruin, all these you must never neglect. The least man is worth gaining at a small cost. And besides, while you are serving yourself, you are also obtaining the character of civility, diligence, and goodnature. But the arts which cost you much labour — a long subservience to one testy individual; aping the semblance of a virtue, a quality, or a branch of learning which you do not possess, to a person difficult to blind — all these, never begin except for great ends, worth not only the loss of time, but the chance of detection. Great pains for small gains is the maxim of the miser. The rogue should have more *grandeur d'âme!*

XV.

Always forgive.

XVI.

If a man owe you a sum of money — people though you be of mine, you may have in your lives be so silly as to lend — and you find it difficult to get it back, appeal not to his justice, but his charity. The components of

justice flatter few men! Who likes to submit to an inconvenience because he ought to do it?—without praise, without even self-gratulation? But charity, my dear friends, tickles up human ostentation deliciously. Charity implies superiority; and the feeling of superiority is most grateful to social nature. Hence the commonness of charity, in proportion to other virtues, all over the world; and hence you will especially note, that in proportion as people are haughty and arrogant will they laud almsgiving and encourage charitable institutions.

XVII.

Your genteel rogues do not sufficiently observe the shrewdness of the vulgar ones. The actual beggar takes advantage of every sore; but the moral awindler is unpardonably dull as to the happiness of a physical infirmity. To obtain a favour—neglect no method that may allure compassion. I knew a worthy curate, who obtained two livings by the felicity of a hectic cough; and a younger brother, who subsisted for ten years on his family by virtue of a slow consumption.

XVIII.

When you want to possess yourself of a small sum, recollect that the small sum be put into juxtaposition with a great. I do not express myself clearly—take an example. In London there are sharpers who advertise 70,000*l.* to be advanced at four per cent., principals only conferred with. The gentleman wishing for such a sum on mortgage, goes to see the advertiser; the advertiser says he must run down and look at the property on which the money is to be advanced; his journey and expenses will cost him a mere trifle—say twenty guineas. Let him speak confidently—let the gentleman very much want the money at the interest stated, and three to one,

but our sharper gets the twenty guineas, so paltry a sum in comparison to 70,000*l.* though so serious a sum had the matter related to half-pence!

XIX.

Lord Coke has said, "To trace an error to its fountain-head is to refute it." Now, my young pupils, I take it for granted that you are interested in the preservation of error; you do not wish it, therefore, to be traced to its fountain-head. Whenever, then, you see a sharp fellow tracking it up, you have two ways of settling the matter. You may say with a smile, "Nay, now, sir, you grow speculative—I admire your ingenuity;" or else look grave, colour up, and say—"I fancy, sir, there is no warrant for this assertion in the most sacred of all authorities!" The Devil can quote Scripture, you know, and a very sensible Devil it is too!

XX.

Roche foucault has said, "The hate of favourites is nothing else but the love of favour." The idea is a little cramped; the hate we bear to any man is only the result of our love for some good which we imagine he possesses, or which, being in our possession, we imagine he has attacked. Thus envy, the most ordinary species of hate, arises from our value for the glory, or the plate, or the content we behold; and revenge is born from our regard for our fame that has been wounded, or our acres molested, or our rights invaded. But the most noisy of all hatreds is hatred for the rich, from love for the riches. Look well on the poor devil who is always railing at coaches and four! Book him as a man to be bribed!

XXI.

My beloved pupils, few have yet sufficiently studied the art by which the practice of jokes becomes subser-

vient to the science of swindlers. The heart of an inferior is always fascinated by a jest. Men know this in the knavery of elections. Know it now, my pupils, in the knavery of life! When you slap your cobbler so affectionately on the back it is your own fault if you do not slap your purpose into him at the same time. Note how Shakespeare (when study night and day) — no man hath better expounded the mysteries of roguery — causes his grandest and most accomplished villain, Richard III., to address his good friends, the murderers, with a jocular jesting on that hardness of heart on which, doubtless, those poor fellows most piqued themselves —

"Your eyes drop mellestence, where *fools'*
 eyes drop tears —
 I like you, lads!"

Can't you fancy the knowing grin with which the dupe received this compliment, and the little sly punch in the stomach with which Richard dropped those loving words, "I like you, lads!"

XXII.

As good nature is the characteristic of the dupe, so should good temper be that of the knave; the two fit into each other like joints. Happily, good nature is a Narcissus, and falls in love with its own likeness. And good temper is to good nature what the Plumed of snow was to the Plumed of flesh — an exact likeness made of the coldest materials.

XXIII.

BRING THE PRINCE OF KNAVERY.

A knave is a philosopher, though a philosopher is not necessarily a knave. What hath a knave to do with passions? Every irregular desire he must suppress; every fault he must weed out; his whole life is spent in the acquisition of knowledge; for what is knowledge? — the discovery of

human errors! He is the only man always consistent, yet ever examining; he knows but one end, yet explores every means; danger, ill-repute, all that terrify other men, daunt not him; he braves all, but is saved from all; for I hold that a knave ceaseth to be the knave — he hath passed into the fool — the moment mischief befalls him. He professes the art of cheating; but the art of cheating is to cheat without peril. He is *terea et rotundus*, strikes fly from the lubricity of his polish, and the shiftings of his circular formation. He who is insensible of the glory of his profession, who is open only to the profit, is no disciple of mine. I hold of knavery, as Plato hath said of virtue — "Could it be seen incarnate, it would buy a personal adoration!" None but those who are inspired by a generous enthusiasm, will benefit by the above maxims; nor (and here I warn you solemnly from the sacred ground, till your head be uncovered, and your feet be bared in the awe of veneration,) enter with profit upon the following descriptions of character — that Temple of the Ten Statues — wherein I have stored and consecrated the most treasured relics of my travelled thoughts and my collected experience.

THE CHARACTERS.

I.

THE mild, irresolute, good-natured, and indolent man. These qualities are accompanied with good feelings, but no principles. The want of firmness evinces also the want of any peculiar or deeply-rooted system of thought. A man conning a single and favourite subject of meditation, grows wedded to one or the other of the opinions on which he resolves. A man universally irresolute, has generally led a desultory life, and never given his attention long together to one thing; this is a man most easy to cheat, my beloved friends;

you cheat him even with his eyes open: indolence is dearer to him than all things, and if you get him alone and put a question to him point blank—he cannot answer, No.

II.

The timid, suspicious, selfish, and cold man. Generally, a character of this description is an excellent man of business, and would, at first sight, seem to baffle the most ingenious swindler. But you have one hope—I have rarely found it deceive me—this man is usually ostentatious. A cold, a fearful, yet a worldly person, has ever an eye upon others; he notes the effect certain things produce on them; he is anxious to learn their opinions, that he may not transgress; he likes to know what the world say of him; nay, his timidity makes him anxious to repose his selfishness on their good report. Hence he grows ostentatious, likes that effect which is favourably talked of, and that show which wins consideration. At him on this point, my pupils!

III.

The melancholy, retired, sensitive, intellectual character. A very good subject this for your knaveries, my young friends; though it requires great discrimination and delicacy. This character has a considerable portion of morbid suspicion and irritability belonging to it—against these you must guard—at the same time, its prevalent feature is a powerful, but unacknowledged vanity. It is generally a good opinion of himself, and a feeling that he is not appreciated by others, that make a man reserved; he deems himself unfit for the world because of the delicacy of his temperament, and the want of a correspondent sensibility in those he sees! This is your handle to work on. He is peculiarly flattered, too, on the score of devotion and affection; he exacts in

love, as from the world—too much. He is a *Lara*, whose females must be *Medoras*: and even his male friends should be extremely like *Kaleds*! Poor man! you see how easily he can be duped. Mem.—Among persons of this character are usually found those oddities, humours, and peculiarities, which are each a handle. No man lives out of the world with impunity to the solidity of his own character. Every new outlet to the humour is a new inlet to the heart.

IV.

The bold, generous, frank, and affectionate man;—usually a person of robust health. His constitution keeps him in spirits, and his spirits in courage and in benevolence. He is obviously not a hard character, my good young friends, for you to deceive; for he wants suspicion, and all his good qualities lay him open to you. But beware his anger when he finds you out! he is a terrible *Othello* when his nature is once stung. Mem.—A good sort of character to seduce into illegal practices: makes a tolerable traitor, or a capital smuggler; you yourselves must never commit any illegal offence: arn't there cats paws for the chesnuts? As all laws are oppressions (only necessary and often sacred oppressions, which you need not explain to him), and his character is especially hostile to oppression, you easily seduce the person we describe into braving the laws of his country. Yes! the bold, generous, frank, and affectionate man, has only to be born in humble life to be sure of a halter!

V.

The bold, selfish, close, grasping man, will, in all probability, cheat *you*, my dear friends. For such a character makes the master-rogue, the stuff from which Nature forms a *Richard the Third*. You had better leave such a man quite alone. He is

bad even to serve. He breaks up his tools when he has done with them. No, you can do nothing with him, my good young men!

VI.

The eating, drinking, unthoughtful, sensual, mechanical man—the ordinary animal. Such a creature has cunning, and is either cowardly or ferocious, seldom in these qualities he preserves a medium. He is not by any means easy to dupe. Nature defends her mental brutes by the thickness of their hide. Win his mistress if possible; she is the best person to manage him. Such creatures are the natural prey of artful women, their very stolidity covers all but sensuality. To the Sampson—the Danish.

VII.

The gay, deceitful, shrewd, polished, able man, the courtier, the man of the world. In public and stirring life, this is the fit antagonist—often the successful and conquering rival of Character V. You perceive a man like this varies so greatly in intellect, from the mere butterfly talent to the master genius; from the person you see at cards to the person you see in cabinets—from the — to the Chesterfield—from the Chesterfield to the Paradise;—that it is difficult to give you an exact notion of the weak points of a character so various. But while he dupes his equals and his superiors, I consider him, my attentive pupils, by no means a very difficult character for an inferior to dupe. And in this manner you must go about it. Do not attempt hypocrisy; he will see through it in an instant. Let him think you at once, and at first sight, a rogue. Be careful on that matter yourself: but let him think you an useful rogue. Serve him well and zealously; but own that you do so, because you consider your interest involved in this. This rea-

soning satisfies him; and as men of this character are usually generous, he will acknowledge his justice by throwing you plenty of sops, and stimulating you with bountiful cordials. Should he not content you herein, appear contented; and profit in betraying him (*that is the best way to cheat him*;) not by his feelings, but by opportunity. Watch not his character, but your time.

VIII.

The vain, arrogant, brave, amorous, flashy character. This sort of character we formerly attributed to the French, and it is still more common to the Continent than that beloved island which I shall see no more! A creature of this description is made up of many false virtues; above others, it is always profuse where its selfishness is appealed to, not otherwise. You must find, then, what pleases it, and pander to its tastes. So will ye cheat it—or ye will cheat it also by affecting the false virtues which it admires itself—rouse your sentiments highly, and let them strut with a bushy air; thirdly, my good young men, ye will cheat it by profuse flattery, and by calling it in especial, “the mirror of chivalry.”

IX.

The plain, sensible, honest man.—A favourable, but not elevated specimen of our race. This character, my beloved pupils, you may take in once, but never twice. Nor can you take in such a man as a stranger; he must be your friend, or relation, or have known intimately some part of your family. A man of this character is always open, though in a moderate and calm degree, to the duties and ties of life. He will always do something to serve his friend, his brother, or the man whose father pulled his father out of the Serpentine. Affect with him no varnish; exert no artifice in attempting to obtain his assistance. Candidly

state your wish for such or such a service—sensibly state your pretensions—modestly hint at your gratitude. So may you deceive him once, then leave him alone for ever!

X.

The fond, silly, credulous man; all impulse, and no reflection!—How my heart swells when I contemplate this excellent character! What a Canaan for you does it present! I envy you launching into the world with the sanguine hope of finding all men such! Delightful enthusiasm of youth—would that the hope could be realised! Here is the very incarnation of gullibility. You have only to make him love you, and no hedgehog ever sucked egg as you can suck him. Never be afraid of his indignation; go to him again and again; only throw yourself on his neck and weep. To gull him once, is to gull him always; get his first shilling, and then calculate what you will do with the rest of his fortune. Never desert so good a

man for new friends, that would be ungrateful in you! And take with you, by the way, my good young gentlemen, this concluding maxim. Men are like lands; you will get more by lavishing all your labour again and again upon the easy, than by ploughing up new ground in the sterile!

Legislators—wise—good—pious men,—the Tom Thumbs of moral science, who make giants first, and then kill them;* you think the above lessons villanous: I honour your penetration! they are not proofs of my villany, but of your folly! Look over them again, and you will see that they are designed to show that while ye are imprisoning, transporting, and hanging thousands every day, a man with a decent modicum of cunning might practise every one of those lessons which seem to you so heinous, and not one of your laws could touch him!

* “He made the giants first, and then he killed them.”

BRACHYLOGIA;

OR,

ESSAYS,

CRITICAL, SENTIMENTAL, MORAL, AND ORIGINAL.

ADDRESSED TO HIS PUPILS.

By AUGUSTUS TOMLINSON.

The irony in the preceding essays is often lost sight of in the present. The illness of this great man, which happened while composing these little gems, made him perhaps more in earnest than when in robust health.—*Editor's Note.*

ON THE MORALITY TAUGHT BY THE
RICH TO THE POOR.

As soon as the urchin pauper can totter out of doors, it is taught to pull off its hat, and pull its hair to the quality. "A good little boy," says the squire; there's a ha'penny for you." The good little boy grows with pride. That ha'penny instils deep the lesson of humility. Now goes our urchin to school. Then comes the Sunday teaching—before church—which en-joins the poor to be lowly, and to re-joice every man better off than themselves. A pound of butter to the squire, and an ounce to the landlady. Then the boy grows up; and the Lord of the Manor instructs him thus. "Be good boy, Tom, and I'll befriend you; tread in the steps of your father; he was an excellent man, and a great loss to the parish; he was a very civil,

hard-working, well-behaved creature; knew his station;—mind, and do like him!" So perpetual hard labour, and plenty of cringing, make the ancestral virtues to be perpetuated to peasants till the day of judgment! Another insidious distillation of morality is conveyed through a general praise of the poor. You hear false friends of the people, who call themselves Liberals, and Tories, who have an idea of morals, half chivalric, half pastoral, agreed in lauding the unfortunate creatures whom they keep at work for them. But mark the virtues the poor are always to be praised for:—Industry, Honesty, and Content. The first virtue is extolled to the skies, because Industry gives the rich every thing they have; the second, because Honesty prevents an loss of the said every thing being taken away again;

and the third, because Content is to hinder these poor devils from ever objecting to a lot, so comfortable to the persons who profit by it. This, my Pupils, is the morality taught by the Rich to the Poor!

EMULATION.

The great error of emulation is this, —we emulate effects without inquiring into causes; when we read of the great actions of a man, we are on fire to perform the same exploits, without endeavouring to ascertain the precise qualities which enabled the man we imitate to commit the actions we admire. Could we discover these, how often might we discover that their origin was a certain temper of body, a certain peculiarity of constitution, and that, wish we for the same success, we should be examining the nature of our *bones*, rather than sharpening the faculties of our minds; should use dumb-bells, perhaps, instead of books; nay, on the other hand, contract some grievous complaint, rather than perfect our moral salubrity. Who should say whether Alexander would have been a hero, had his neck been straight; or Boileau a satirist, had he never been pecked by a turkey? It would be pleasant to see you, my beloved pupils, after reading "Quintus Curtius," twisting each other's throat; or, fresh from Boileau, hurrying to the poultry-yard, in the hope of being mutilated into the performance of a second Lutrín.

CAUTION AGAINST THE SOOPPERS OF "HUMBAG."

My beloved pupils, there is a set of persons in the world daily-increasing, against whom you must be greatly on your guard; there is a fascination about them. They are people who declare themselves vehemently opposed to humbug; fine, liberal fellows, clear-sighted, yet frank. When these sentiments arise from reflection, well and

good, they are the best sentiments in the world; but many take them up second-hand; they are very inviting to the indolence of the mob of gentlemen, who see the romance of a noble principle, not its utility. When a man looks at every thing through this dwarfing philosophy, every thing has a great modicum of humbug. You laugh with him when he derides the humbug in religion, the humbug in politics, the humbug in love, the humbug in the plausibilities of the world; but you may cry, my dear pupils, when he derides what is often the safest of all *practically* to deride, —the humbug in common honesty! Men are honest from religion, wisdom, prejudice, habit, fear, and stupidity; but the few only are wise; and the persons we speak of deride religion, are beyond prejudice, unawed by habit, too indifferent for fear, and too experienced for stupidity.

POPULAR WRATH AT INDIVIDUAL IMPRUDENCE.

You must know, my dear young friends, that while the appearance of magnanimity is very becoming to you, and so forth, it will get you a great deal of ill-will, if you attempt to practise it to your own detriment. Your neighbours are so invariably, though perhaps insensibly, actuated by self-interest*—self-interest is so entirely, though every twaddler denies it, the axis of the moral world, that they fly into a rage with him who seems to disregard it. When a man ruins himself, just hear the abuse he receives; his neighbours take it as a personal affront!

DUM DEFLUAT ANNIS.

One main reason why men who have been great are disappointed, when they retire to private life, is this: memory

* Mr. Tomlinson is wrong here. But his ethics were too much narrowed to *utilitarian* principles.—*EDIT.*

makes a chief source of enjoyment to those who have eagerly to hope; but the poverty of the great means only that people live which has disgusted them. Their private life has slipped insensibly away, leaving faint traces of the sorrow or the joy which found them too busy to heed the simple and quiet impressions of more democratic necessities.

SELF-GLORIFIED.

Providence seems to have done to a certain set of persons, who always view their worthings through a magnifying medium, even their house the best in the world, their pen the truest, their way pointer a miracle—as General Haughey suggested to communicate to do, we provide their servants each with a pair of large quantities, so that a lark might appear as big as a fowl, and a twopenny loaf as large as quartern.

THOUGHT ON FORTUNE.

It is often the earliest move that completes the game. Fortune is like the ball when a lover carried off from all his rivals by putting an additional lace upon his inventory.

WIT AND TRUTH.

People may talk about fiction being the source of fancy, and wit being at variance with truth; now some of the wisest things in the world are witty only from their truth. Truth is the soul of a good saying. "You assert," observes the flourisher of modern times, "that we have a virtual representation; very well, let us have a virtual taxation too." Here the wit is in the ability of the speaker. When Columbus broke the egg, where was the wit?—In the completeness of conviction in the broken egg.

AUTO-THEOLOGY.

Not only every sect but every individual modifies the general attributes

of the Deity towards assimilation with his own character; the just man dwells on the justice, the stern upon the wrath; the ascetic that do not please the worshippers he inwardly forgets. Wherefore, oh my people, you will not smile when you read in Barnes that the pagans declared Jesus himself was a pagan. The pious vanity of man makes him adore his own qualities under the pretence of worshipping those of his God.

GLORIOUS CONSTITUTION.

A sentence is sometimes as good as a volume. If a man ask you to give him some idea of the laws of England, the answer is short and easy: in the laws of England there are somewhere about one hundred and fifty laws by which a poor man may be hanged, but not one by which he can obtain justice for nothing!

ANSWER TO THE POPULAR CRY THAT COMMON SENSE IS A STATESMAN IS BETTER THAN ABILITY.

As in the world we must look to actions, not motives, so a knave is the man who injures you; and you do not inquire whether the injury is the fruit of malice or necessity. Place then a fool in power, and he becomes unconsciously the knave. Mr. Addington stumbled on the two very worst and most villainous taxes human malice could have invented—one on medicine, the other on justice. What tyrant's fearful ingenuity could afflict us more than by impeding at once redress for our wrongs and cure for our diseases? Mr. Addington was the fool in-office, and therefore the knave in-office; but, bless you! he never meant it!

COMMON SENSE.

Common sense—common sense of all phrases, all catch-words, this is often the most deceitful and the most dangerous. Look, in especial, except

ciously upon common sense whenever it is opposed to discovery. Common sense is the experience of every day. Discovery is something against the experience of every day. No wonder, then, that when Galileo proclaimed a great truth, the universal cry was, "Pah! common sense will tell you the reverse." Talk to a sensible man, for the first time, on the theory of vision, and hear what his common sense will say to it. In a letter in the time of Bacon, the writer, of no mean intellect himself, says, "It is a pity the chancellor should set his opinion against the experience of so many centuries and the dictates of common sense." Common sense, then, so useful in household matters, is less useful in the legislative and in the scientific world than it has been generally deemed. Naturally the advocate for what has been tried, and averse to what is speculative, it opposes the new philosophy that appeals to reason, and clings to the old which is propped by sanction.

LOVE, AND WRITERS ON LOVE.

My warm, hot-headed, ardent young friends, ye are in the flower of your life, and writing verses about love,—let us say a word on the subject. There are two species of love common to all men and to most animals; * one springs from the senses, the other grows out of custom. Now neither of these, my dear young friends, is the love that you pretend to feel—the love of *lovers*. Your passion having only its foundation (and that unacknowledged) in the senses, owes every thing else to the imagination. Now the imagination of the majority is different in complexion and degree, in every country and in every age; so also, and consequently, is the love of the imagination: as a proof, observe that you sympathise with the romantic

love of other times or nations only in proportion as you sympathise with their poetry and imaginative literature. The love which stalks through the *Arcadia*, or *Amadis of Gaul*, is to the great bulk of readers coldly insipid, or solemnly ridiculous. Alas, when those works excited enthusiasm, so did the love which they describe. The long speeches, the lofty compliments, expressed the feeling of the day. The love madrigals of the time of Shenstone, or the brocade gallantries of the French poets in the last century, any woman now would consider hollow or childish, imbecile or artificial. Once the songs were natural and the love seductive. And now, my young friends, in the year 1822, in which I write, and shall probably die, the love which glitters through Moore, and walks so ambitiously ambiguous through the verse of Byron; the love which you consider now so deep and so true; the love which tingles through the hearts of your young ladies, and sets you young gentlemen gazing on the evening-star; all that love too will become unfamiliar or ridiculous to an after age; and the young aspirings, and the moonlight dreams, and the vague fiddle-de-dees, which ye now think so touching and so sublime, will go, my dear boys, where Cowley's Mistress and Waller's *Sacharissa* have gone before; go with the Sapphos and the Chloes, the elegant "charming fairs," and the chivalric "most beauteous princesses!" The only love-poetry that stands through all time and appeals to all hearts, is that which is founded on either or both the species of love natural to all men; the love of the senses, and the love of custom. In the latter is included what middle-aged men call the rational attachment, the charm of congenial minds, as well as the homely and warmer accumulation of little memories of simple kindness, or the mere brute habitude

* Most animals; for some appear insensible to the love of custom.

of seeing a face as one would see a chair. These, sometimes singly, sometimes skilfully blended, make the theme of those who have perhaps found the most honestly and the most honestly; those yet render Tibullus pathetic, and Ovid a master over tender relations; and those, above all, make that irresistible and all-teaching inspiration which subdues the romantic, the calculating, the old, the young, the courtier, the peasant, the poet, the man of business, in the glorious love-poetry of Robert Burns.

THE GREAT ENTAIL.

The great inheritance of man is a continuous chain of blunders: one race spend their lives in blotting the errors transmitted to them by another; and the same error of all political, &c. all the worst and most general, blunders is now—the same rule we apply to individual cases we will not apply to public. All men consent that swindling for a horse is swindling,—they punish the culprit and condemn the cheat. But in a state there is a much greater. Swindling, Lord Byron said is called by some fine names, and swindling grows grandiloquent, and styles itself “Policy.” In consequence of this, there is always a battle between those who call things by their right names, and those who purposefully give them the wrong ones. Hence all sorts of confusion; this confusion extends very soon to the laws made for individual cases, and there is old statutes, though the world is well agreed that private swindling is private swindling, there is the devil’s own activity in perverting the swindling of the public. The art of swindling now is a different thing to the art of swindling an hundred years ago; but the laws remain the same. Adaptation in private cases is innovation in public; so, without repealing old laws they make new, sometimes these are effectual, but more often

not. Now, my beloved pupils, a law is a gun, which if it misses a pigeon always kills a crow; if it does not strike the guilty it hits some one else. As every crime creates a law, so in turn every law creates a crime; and hence we go on multiplying sins and evils, and faults and blunders, till society becomes the organised disorder for picking pockets.

THE REGENERATION OF A KNAVE.

A man who begins the world by being a fool, often ends it by becoming a knave; but he who begins as a knave, if he be a rich man and so not hanged), may end, my beloved pupils, in being a pious creature. And this is the wherefore: “a knave early” soon gets knowledge of the world. One vice worn out makes us wiser than fifty tutors. But wisdom causes us to love quiet, and in quiet we do not sin. He who is wise and sins not can scarcely fail of doing good; for let him but utter a new truth, and even his congregation cannot conceive the limit of the good he may have done to man!

STYLE.

Do you well understand what a wonderful thing style is? I think not, for in the exercises you sent me, your style betrayed that no very earnest consideration had been lavished upon them. Know, then, that you must pause well before you take up any model of style. On your style often depends your own character,—almost always the character given you by the world. If you adopt the lofty style,—if you string together noble phrases and swelling sentences, you have expressed, avowed, a frame of mind which you will unceasingly desire to set up to the world; gradually begets the capacity. The life of Dr. Parr is Dr. Parr’s style put in action. And Lord Byron makes himself through existence up

happy for having accidentally slipped into a melancholy current of words. But suppose you escape this calamity by a peculiar hardihood of temperament, you escape not the stamp of popular opinion. Addison must ever be held by the vulgar the most amiable of men, because of the social amenity of his diction; and the admirers of language will always consider Burke a nobler spirit than Fox, because of the grandeur of his sentences. How many wise sayings have been called jests because they were wittily uttered! How many nothings swelled their author into a sage; ay, a saint, because they were strung together by the old hypocrite nun—Gravity!

THE END.



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